# Sidney's
# an Apology for Poetry

Dr. Raghukul Tilak

rama brothers
NEW DELHI-5

Padman Krishan Dhar

Principal
Govt. Higher Secondary Institution,
(KASHMIR)

Padman Krishen Dhar
M.A. (Pol. Sc. Eco. Eng. Hist.) B.Ed.
Motiyar Rainawari
SRINAGER-190003
KASHMIR

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

# AN APOLOGY FOR POETRY

*By the Same Author* :

T.S. ELIOT :
1. *The 'Waste Land' and Other Poems*
2. *The Critic*
3. *Murder in the Cathedral*
4. *The Cocktail Party*
5. *The Family Reunion*

BERNARD SHAW :
6. *Man and Superman*
7. *Arms and the Man*
8. *Saint Joan*
9. *Candida*
10. *Major Barbara*

GEORGE ELIOT :
11. *Middlemarch*
12. *Mill on the Floss*
13. *Adam Bede*

ARISTOTLE :
14. *The Poetics*

COLERIDGE :
15. *Biographia Literaria*

WORDSWORTH :
16. *Preface to the Lyrical Ballads*

DRYDEN :
17. *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*

SIDNEY
18. *An Apology for Poetry*

JOHN WEBSTER :
19. *The Duchess of Malfi*

VIRGINIA WOOLF :
20. *To The Lighthouse*
21. *Mrs Dalloway*

W.M. THACKERAY :
22. *Vanity Fair*

JOSEPH CONRAD :
23. *Lord Jim*

ROBERT BROWNING :
24. *Select Poems, Vol. I*
25. *Select Poems, Vol. II*

ALFRED TENNYSON :
26. *Select Poems*

W.H. AUDEN :
27. *Select Poems*
28. *Ascent of F-6*

JOHN DONNE :
29. *Select Poems*

JOHN MILTON :
30. *Minor Poems*

MATTHEW ARNOLD
31. *Essays in Criticism*

SHAKESPEARE :
32. *Much Ado About Nothing*
33. *Henry IV, Part I (A Critical Study)*
34. *Henry IV, Part I (Text with Annotations)*
35. *Richard II*

ROBERT FROST :
36. *Select Poems*

WALT WHITMAN :
37. *Select Poems*

EUGENE O'NEILL :
38. *The Hairy Ape*
39. *Desire Under the Elms*
40. *The Iceman Cometh*

R.K. NARAYAN :
41. *The Guide*

TAGORE :
42. *Gitanjali*

RAJA RAO :
43. *Kanthapura*
44. *The Serpent and the Rope*

KAMALA MARKANDAYA:
45. *Nectar in a Sieve*

MULK RAJ ANAND :
46. *Coolie*
47. *Untouchable*

SAROJINI NAIDU :
48. *Select Poems*
49. *New Indian English Poets & Poetry*

SRI AUROBINDO :
50. *Savitri, Book I and Other Poems*

DYLAN THOMAS :
51. *Select Poems*
52. *History and Principles of Literary Criticism*
53. *New Criticism and New Critics*
54. *The Background to English Literature*
55. **New-Pattern English Grammar and Composition**

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

# An Apology for Poetry

**Dr. RAGHUKUL TILAK**, M.A., Ph.D.
*Department of English*
*Meerut College*
*MEERUT*

Third Revised Edition
1983

G.M. College of Education
Raipur, Bantalab
Jammu.
Acc. No. 2402 (D)
Dated. 4/11/2015

*RAMA BROTHERS*
EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHERS
Bank Street, Karol Bagh
NEW DELHI-110005

© Reserved by the Author

*First Edition* : *1976*
*Second Edition* : *1979*
*Third Edition* : *1983*

RAMA BROTHERS
PRICE
RS. 14-00

*Published by* :
**RAMA BROTHERS**
(Publication Division)
Bank Street, Karol Bagh
New Delhi-110005
Phone : 567313

*Printed by* :
K.K. Enterprises,
Padam Nagar, Delhi-110007

# PREFACE TO THF THIRD EDITION

It is a great pleasure for an author to find that his book has been appreciated by those for whom it is meant. That a third edition has been needed within so short a time is ample evidence of its utility and popularity. An additional chapter on Select Literary Criticism has been added to make the book more useful for the examinees.

Further suggestions for improvement are invited and would be gratefully accepted for incorporation in the next edition.

*Meerut*
*December 1982*

**—Author**

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

Sidney's *Apology for Poetry* is a critical document of great significance. It is an epitome of Renaissance Criticism, and a key to the understanding of the Elizabethan theory of poetry. It is, therefore, in the fitness of things that it is usually prescribed for detailed study by the various universities in the country.

The present study is designed to fulfil the needs of students in India. During recent years standards of English have rapidly gone down in the country. It has become increasingly clear that, if English literature is to survive in India, English classics must be introduced to examinees in an easy popular form. This has been the aim of the present writer. A glance at the contents suffice to bring out its usefulness not only for the students but also for the general reader.

The emphasis throughout has been on clarification and evaluation. To facilitate further the task of the examinees, often hard pressed for time, the relevant critical material has been presented in a lucid simple manner. While the treatment is comprehensive and elaborate, it in no way precludes a study of the original text, which is essential for a proper and genuine understanding.

Long quotations have been eschewed as far as possible. Textual problems have been fully dealt with in the light of the questions generally set by various universities. A list of books consulted and drawn upon is appended at the end. It should serve as a guide to further reading.

I am grateful to the publishers, for the keen interest they have taken, and the co-operation they have extended to me, in making the book uptodate.

*Meerut,*
*September, 1976*

**AUTHOR**

## CONTENTS

*Chapter* *Page*

1. Sir Philip Sidney : Life and Career ... 1
2. Trends in Renaissance Criticism
   *Or*
   Literary Criticism in the Age of Sidney ... 4
3. An Apology for Poetry : Introduction and Appreciation ... 9
4. A General Estimate of Sidney as a Critic—His Achievement and Influence
   *Or*
   The 'Apology' as an "Epitome of Renaissance Criticism" ... 12
5. Critical Synopsis of Sidney's "Defence of Poetry"
   *Or*
   "A Defence of Poetry" at a Glance ... 16
6. Detailed Critical Summary of Sidney's "Defence of Poetry" ... 22
7. **Critical Review of Sidney's "Defence of Poetry"** ...
   (1) Nature and Function of Poetry : Sidney's Exalted Conception of it ... 45
   (2) Poetry : Its Superiority over Philosophy and History ... 47
   (3) Objection Against Poetry, Sidney's Defence—Sidney's Reply to the Critics of Poetry ... 49
   (4) Sidney's view of contemporary tragedy and tragicomedy—His conception of tragedy. ... 51
   (5) Sidney's Criticism of Contemporary Comedy ... 52
   (6) The Three Unities : Sidney's Views ... 53
   (7) The Classical and Romantic Elements ... 55
8. TEXT OF **AN APOLOGY FOR POETRY** ... 58
9. Critical and Explanatory Comments ... 94
10. Select Literary Criticism ... 119
11. University Questions ... 134
   Suggested Readings ... 136

# 1

# *Sir Philip Sidney : Life and Career*

(*1554-1586*)

---

## Birth and Early Education

Philip Sidney was born on November 30th, 1554, at Penshurst. He was the second child of Sir Henry Sidney and Lady Mary Dudley, daughter of the Duke of Northumberland. He received his early education at Shrewsbury School. He was a precosious child. At the age of twelve he could correspond with his father both in Latin and French. It was at school that he began his life-long friendship with Fulke Greville. From Shrewsbury School, he went to Christ Church College, Oxford, in 1578.

## Travels Abroad : Friendships

In the spring of 1571, Sidney left Oxford without a degree, and in 1572 he made his first visit to the Continent to complete his education. He visited Paris, Vienna, Veniee, and Prague, and returned home in 1575. He now entered the court and became at once very popular, by virtue of the patronage of his uncle, the Earl of Leicester and his own qualities of head and heart. In the summer of 1575, he first met Penelope, the "Stella" of his sonnet-sequence *Astrophel and Stella*. In July, 1578, he was introduced to Gabriel Harvey and through him to Spenser who dedicated his *Shepherd's Calendar* to him. The there friends along with some other literary men of the day started a literary society called the *Areopagus*. Sidney's old college friends, Fulke Greville and Edward Dyer, also joined them.

## Sidney in Disfavour

In 1580, Sidney, in support of his uncle, wrote a letter to the queen, criticising her proposed marriage with the Duke of Anjou and advocating matrimonial alliance with his uncle. The queen

1580
Criticised Queen
for her proposed
marriage with the
Duke of Anjou

was angry and Sidney was excluded from the court. Sidney had to go into retirement at Wilton, where he wrote the *Arcadia.* Here too he probably wrote the *Apologie for Poetrie.*

## Marriage : Last Years and Death

In 1581, he was again in favour at the court. In January, 1583, he was Knighted, and on September, the 21st, he married Frances Walsingham, the daughter of Elizabeth's famous Secretary of State. Two years later he was appointed governor of Flushing and in 1586, at the battle of *Zutphen*, he received a fatal wound. When offered a glass of water, he gave it to a wounded soldier, 'saying', "The need is greater than mine", He died on the 17th of October, 1586, and was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral after a magnificent public funeral. Thus was cut short the career of a perfect gentleman and eminent man of letters.

## CHRONOLOGY

1554 : Philip Sidney bron (30 November) at Penshurst, Kent ; eldest son of Sir Henry Sidney and Mary Sidney.

1564 : enters Shrewsbury School (forms life-long friendship with Fulke-Greville).

1568 : Joins Christ Church, Oxford.

1571 : leaves Oxford (without taking any degree), becomes a courtier

1572 : visits Paris. Witnesses the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre of the Protestants. Leaves Paris.

1573 : at Frankfort ; meets Hubert Languet, a French scholar, whose pupil he becomes. Follows Languet to Vienna. Goes to Italy.

1574 : Travels through Italy, Poland, Vienna.

1575 : returns to England.

1576 : Joins his father in Ireland.

1577 : is sent on diplomatic mission to Germany. Returns to England, pays a visit to his sister Mary (married in April to Earl of Pembroke) at Wilton, and begins *Arcadia*.

1578 : writes an able defence of his father's Irish policy ; becomes the friend of Spenser.

1579 : studies the use of Latin metres for English poetry with Spenser, Dyre and Harvey.

Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* and Gosson's *School of Abuse* are dedicated to him.

1580 : completes *Arcadia* ane writes *An Apology for Poetry*, incurs the disfavour of Queen Elizabeth by criticising her proposed marriage with Duke of Anjou.

1581 : becomes Member of Parliament. Penelope Devereux (the *Stella* of his *Sonnets*) marries Lord Rich.

1582 : goes with the Duke of Anjou to the Netherlands ; writes *Astrophel and Stella*.

1583 : Sidney is Knighted. Marries Frances, daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham.

1584 : revises *Arcadia*. Interested in Raleigh's expedition to Virginia. Is appointed ambassador to France. Birth of daughter.

1585 : appointed joint Master of Ordnance. Attempts to join Drake's expedition to the West Indies ; is recalled by Queen Elizabeth and is sent with Leicester on a military expedition to Netherlands. Is made Governor of Flushing.

1586 : is wounded at Zutphen (22 September) ; dies of his wound at Arnhem (17 October).

1587 : magnificent public funeral in St. Paul's Cathedral (16th February).

1595 : Sidney's *An Apology for Poetry* published.

"Your need is greater than mine."

Battle of Zutpen –

Predman Krishen Dhar
M.A. (Pol. Sc. Eco. Eng. His.) B.Ed.
Motiyar, [illegible]
SRINAGER-190003
KASHMIR

Middle ages —
theology the main concern
other arts and literature
was looked down upon

# 2

# Trends in Renaissance Criticism

*Or*

*Literary Criticism in the Age of Sidney*

---

## Revival of Ancient Graeco-Roman Culture—Change in Outlook

It was the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453, which compelled numerous Greek scholars to move westward with their rich treasures of ancient Greek and Roman art and literature. These refugees took shelter in the various capitals of Europe, but more particularly in Italy, which henceforth become the centre of humanistic learning. Thus was ushered in the Renaissance or the revival of ancient Graeco-Roman culture, art and literature. Theology was the main concern of the middle ages. The outlook of life was theocratic and other worldly literature was looked down upon with suspicion as pagan, sensuous and immoral, and, if at all, was justified allegorically. The standards of judgment were theocratic, rather than literary and aesthetic.

Theology
was the main
Concern of
middle ages

## Spurt of Translations ( Revival of classic learning)

With the revival of classical learning all this was changed. Literary theory and criticism received a new emphasis, and there was a marked change in outlook from theocratic to secular. The great works of antiquity were translated and edited in large numbers and were broadcast all over Europe. There was a spurt of translations. No gentleman, no one with any pretentions to culture and refinement, could be without a knowledge of the ancient classics. Young English gentlemen, too, flocked to Italy to drink deep at the fountain of the Muses, and returned home full of admiration for the aesthetic beauty of the ancient masterpieces. The invention of the printing press led to a multiplicity and easy availability of critical and literary Texts, and the process of general awakening was thus speeded up.

Study of
ancient classics became
a fashion of the day.

"ARTS OF POETICA"
BY HORACE

## Critical Activity

The *Ars Poetica* of **Horace** had been known throughout the middle ages, and now during the Renaissance it wielded a wide and far-reaching influence on literary theory and criticism in Italy, France and England. But *the Poetics* of **Aristotle** had lain almost unknown throughout the middle ages. First critical edition of the work, with a Latin commentary, was brought out by the Italian critic Robertello in 1548, and the very next year it was translated into Italian and thus made easily accessible. After this, translations, and annotated and critical editions of Aristotle's treatise on the art of poetry, followed in quick succession, and Aristotle became the predominant force in Renaissance criticism. Editions and translations of Aristotle, Horace, Plato, and other Greek masters, '*helped to bring on a Renaissance of furious theoretical activity, an era of criticism which remains one of the most conspicuous in literary history*"—(**Wimsatt and Brooks**).

## The Italian Influence

Italy was the pioneer in the field, and Italian influence remained predominant all through the 16th and early 17th centuries. This is so much so the case that **J. Spingarn** goes to the extent of saying that English theory of poetry during the Renaissance is very much the same as Italian poetics, and it cannot be appreciated fully without a knowledge of its Italian counterpart. Critical writings in Italy, and so also in England, were mainly of five kinds : (*a*) There was the classical critical text, with critical commentaries annotations, easily available in vernacular translations. As noted above, such texts provided a powerful stimulus to critical writing in all European countries. (*b*) There was the poetic or versified treatise on the art of poetry, in the manner of Horace's *Ars Poetica*. (*c*) There was the deliberately scientific and ambitiously prefaced treatise on the art of poetry in imitation of Aristotle's *Poetics*. The most popular and valuable of such treatises are those of the Italian critic Minturno and of the French critic Scaliger. (*d*) There were apologies or defences of poetry written in reply to the criticism of moralists and other enemies of poetry. The best of such defence of poetry is Sir Philip Sidney's *Defence or Apology of Poetry.* (*e*) The preface or special treatise directed against classical objections to some particular romantic form or some literary text in a vernacular. The best of such defences in the English language are those of Sir John Harrington prefixed to his translation of Ariosto, and that of George Chapman prefixed to his translation of *Iliad*. From a study of these works it emerges that the peculiar concerns of the Renaissance critics were (*a*) literary genres, (*b*) decorum and rules, (*c*) the classic *vs.* English metres, and (*d*) justification of imaginative literature in the face of attacks from purists and moralists.

Defences.
Apologi
Poetry

## The Five Stages (*a*) Rhetorical Criticism

The chief characteristics of English literary criticism during the Renaissance are clearly brought out, if we briefly consider the

"Acham is the first English Classicist as a result of his humanistic training."

course of its evolution during the 16th and early 17th centuries. It passed through five more or less distinct stages of development, and in all the stages (except the fifth) it is the Italian influence which predominates. In the first stage, the study of literature was purely rhetorical. The first important work of such rhetorical criticism is **Wilson's** *Art of Rhetorike*, 1553, a work which has been called by *Warton*, "the first book or system of criticism in our language". It was followed by **Roger Ascham's** *Schoolmaster*, 1568, a work which is predominantly influenced by Italian critical theories, though he is opposed to the romantic Italian spirit and its influence on the imaginative literature of his time. Indeed, this dual tendency is to be witnessed throughout Renaissance criticism. The Italian influence on literature is definitely romantic, while the influences of Italian humanists as shown by English critics is opposed to this romanticism. Ascham is the first English classicist as a result of his humanistic training. **Gabriel Harvey** is another representative of the Rhetorical school of criticism. During this phase, form and style as distinguishing features of literatures were studied, and the result was the formation and development of English prose style.

① Wilson's Art of Rhetorike
② Roger Ascham School master
Gabrial ③ Harvey

**(*b*) Poetic Forms and Metrical Studies**

The second stage was a stage of classification of poetic forms and metrical studies. Puttenham's *Art of English Poesie* is the first systematic classification of poetic forms and subjects, and of rhetorical figures. Harvey's *Letters* and Webb's *Discourse of English Poetrie* are the first systematic attempts to introduce classical metres into English poetry. The group of poet-scholars known as 'Aeropagus' had this end in view. Sidney was a member of this group. By their study and classification of the practical questions of language and versification, such poets were co-operating with the very tendencies which Ascham had been attempting to counteract. The study of verseforms introduced into England from Italy helped to perfect the external side of English poetry ; and a similar result was obtained by the crude attempts at the use of Greek quantitative verse. The Italian prosodists were thus, directly or indirectly, the masters of the English students of this era.

**(*c*) Philosophical and Apologetic Criticism**

The second stage was followed by a stage of philosophical and apologetic criticism. The best and most representative work of this kind is, of course, Sidney's *Defence of Poetry*, 1595. These works, as their titles indicate, are all defences or apologies, and were called forth by the attacks of the Puritans on poetry, especially dramatic poetry, and the attacks of the classicists on English versification and rhyme. Required by the exigencies of the moment to defend poetry in general, these authors set out to examine the fundamental grounds of the criticism of poetry, and to formulate basic principles. In this attempt they, consciously or unconsciously, sought aid from the critics of Italy, and thus commenced in England the influence of the Italian theory of poetry. Speaking of Sidney's *Defence of Poetry*,

**J.A. Symonds** says : "Much as the Italians had recently written upon the theory of poetry, I do not remember any treatise which can be said to have supplied the material or suggested the method of this apology". "On the contrary" says **Spingarn**, "the doctrines discussed by Sidney had been receiving very similar treatment from the Italians for over half a century ; and it can be said without exaggeration that there is not one essential principle in the *Defence of Poesy* which cannot be traced back to some Italian treatise on the poetic art". The age of which Sidney is the chief representative is, therefore, the first period of the influence of Italian critics.

### (*d*) Self-Conscious Art

The fourth stage of Renaissance criticism occupies the first half of the 17th century, and Ben Jonson is the most important literary critic of the age. Says **Spingarn**, "The period that preceded it was in general romantic in its tendencies ; that of Jonson leaned toward a strict, though never servile classicism. Sidney's contemporaries had studied the general theory of poetry, not for the purpose of enunciating rules or dogmas of criticism, but chiefly in order to defend the poetic art, and to understand its fundamental principles. With Jonson the study of the art of poetry became an inseparable guide to creation ; and it is this element of self-conscious art, guided by the rules of criticism, which distinguishes him from his predecessors.

### (*e*) Rise of Neo-classicism

The fifth period which covers the second half of the 17th century, lies, strictly speaking, outside the pale of Renaissance criticism. During this period, Italian influence is replaced by the French influence and we witness the rise of neo-classicism, with all its characteristics features. Rationalism, the restriction of literature to the imitation of nature, with the further limitation of nature to the life of the city and the court, and the confinement of imagination to 'wit', characterise literary inquiry during this period. Dryden is the leading critic of the age.

Italian influence replaced by French influence

### Conclusion

3rd. Stage very important

This brief survey of the evolution of criticism during the Elizabethan age makes it clear that the most important stage in this evolution is the third one, when there was much thinking over the nature and function of poetry, and an English theory of poetry was formulated. Poetry, and all imaginative literature, continued to be justified allegorically, as in the middle ages. The conception of poetry, and the function of a poet, was high. Poets were regarded as spiritual legislators and reformers ; the function of poetry was considered to be to delight as well as to instruct. To be truly and correctly understood, it was supposed, poetry must be moralised and interpreted allegorically. Poetry, in its highest form, is the

"to delight and instruct"

art of making and the poet is a maker, a creator. It can attain perfection only by a divine instinct, or by a great excellence of nature or by vast observation and experience of the world. It is a heavenly gift, the voice of the divine speaking through the poet, but it is much abused and debased. It is to be noted that even the Puritans and moralists who attacked poetry acknowledged its greatness. It was the abuse of poetry which was attacked, and not poetry as such. Says **Spingarn**, "Throughout the Elizabethan age, there was this similarity in the point of view of those who attacked and those who defended poetry. Both sides admitted that not poetry, but its abuse, is to be disparaged, and they differed chiefly in that, the one side insisted almost entirely on the ideal perfection of the poetic art, while the other laid stress on the debased state into which it had fallen."

5 Stages

1, Rhetorical Stage of Criticism.
Study of literature purely rehtorical
Italian influence purely romantic
2. Poetic forms and metericalstudies.
Introduction of classical metres.

3. Philosophical and Apologetic Criticism
Defence of Poetry

4. Self Concious Art
Ben Jonson
Study of Art of Poetry

5. Neo-classicism
Italian influence on English poetry
replaced by French influence

3rd Stage important –
Poets and Poetry regarded
as divine –

Stephen Gossons 'School of ABUSE'
Reply " Apology for Poetry:" –

England was soon turned into a veritable nest of singing birds–

Re-discovery of Aristotle's 'Poetics' in Italy there started a new discussion on the functions and value of Poetry.

# 3

# An Apology for Poetry : Introduction and Appreciation

---

## Poetic Activity During the Renaissance (Last Quarter of 16th Century).

In the last quarter of the 16th the century, the need for a proper understanding of the nature and function of poetry was widely felt. Serious efforts were, for the first time, made to explain, discuss and expound the nature of poetry. Various causes contributed to this need : (1) Much confusion prevailed regarding the true nature of poetry. There was the medieval view point which regarded poetry as a mere 'toy', a mere plaything, or at best, 'versified Rhetoric, rather than a serious art by itself ; (2) The new courtly circle under the patronage of Queen Elizabeth had a high sense of the virtue of poetry, though they were not articulate. The publication of *Tottle's Miscellany*, containing *the Songs and Sonnets* of Wyatt and Surrey, started the vogue of lyrics and sonnets, and England was soon turned into a veritable nest of singing birds. This outburst of poetry naturally called for a theory of poetry. Inquiry into the nature and function of poetry was but the logical corollary of intense creative activity ; (3) With the re-discovery of Aristotle's *Poetics* in Italy, there was much critical discussion in Italy and France regarding the true nature, value and function of Poetry, and this could not but influence writers in England. It gave a powerful stimulus to critical activity in England ; and (4) The hostility of the Puritans posed a challenge to the status and value of Poetry, and the result was replies and counter-replies. The best in the Puritan attacks is represented by **Stephen Gosson's** *School of Abuse*, and the best of the rejoinders is Sidney's *Defence of Poetry*.

## Puritan Attacks on Poetry

**Stephen Gosson** denounced poetry on the following counts : (1) He classed poets with 'pipers and jesters' and called them: "Caterpillers of the Commonwealth" all alike, "enemies to virtue".

"Poetry an enemy to virtue"

(2) Music, he said, is debilitating, and it undermines virtue. (3) Drama is an incitement to "popular debauchery". (4) Plato had banished poets from his ideal commonwealth. (5) The drama was denounced because of its Pagan origin, and because males played female parts, against the law of nature. This made males effeminate, and (6) Tragedies were packed with acts of cruelty, bloodshed and murder, and comedies dealt with love-affairs of vulgar, degrading kind. Comedy evoked 'foolish laughter', while in Tragedy men gave way to uncontrolled passion, and thus the moral fibre was weakened.

## Sidney's Defence of Poetry : Its Publication

Reply to Stephen Gosson.

This forceful attack on poetry, provoked a number of replies, the most reasoned and balanced being that of Sir Philip Sidney. Gosson's pamphlet appeared in 1579, with a dedication, "To the right noble Gentleman, Master Philip Sidney, Esquire". It was the time when Sidney, returned from his educational travels in Switzerland and Italy, standing loosely attached to Elizabeth's court under the patronage of Leicester, and in companionable relation to Spenser and other gentlemen of like spirit, was engaged on his *Sonnets to Stella* and his romance *Arcadia*, by which, in the short time that remained before his death at Zutphen, he became the brilliant symbol of the courtly literary spirit of England. Largely from Gosson's dedication and from an allusion to it by Spenser in a letter dated from Leicester House to the Cambridge scholar, Gabriel Harvey, but in part also from certain passages in Sidney's argument and certain lines of parodied Euphuistic style which seem echoes of Gosson, Sidney's *Defence of Poesie*, though written perhaps as late as 1585, has been traditionally considered as a retort to Gosson. It was circulated in manuscript among a few learned friends during Sidney's life and quoted even by the best writers of the day. In the year 1595, it was published simultaneously by two printers, Ponsonby and Olney, under two titles, *The Defence of Poesie* and *Apologie for Poetrie*.

## An Epitome of Renaissance Criticism

It is a kind of formal beginning of literary theorizing in England, and brilliant enough one—"*Written in the high, enthusiastic style of the gifted amateur champion, headlong to outdazzle the lowness and mypoeia of professional moral grumblers, the essay reflects and telescopes not only the continental criticism of the century but a certain amount of classical Greek and Roman as well*"—**(Wimsatt and Brooks)**. It has been said that passages in the *Defence of Poetry* are based closely on *Minturno*, *Scaligar* and *Castlevetro*. And latterly, the original sources of neo-classic criticism and anti-criticism. Aristotle's *Poetics* and Plato's *Republic, Book X*, have been urged as the true fountains of Sidney's learning. It is certain that he read little Greek, and it appears likely to us that he was better acquainted with contemporary interpretations of classical criticism than with the latter itself. "*But it all matters little. Sidney wrote, not a pedant's encyclopaedia, but a gentleman's essay*"—(**Wimsatt and Brooks**).

## Its Plan

Sidney's *Apology for Poetry* falls easily into five main divisions :

(1) Conventional reasons why poetry should be highly valued —the antiquity and universality of poetry.

(2) Arguments of a more convincing kind, based on an exposition of the nature and usefulness of poetry itself—the kinds of poetry and their usefulness.

(3) Discussion of the current objections against poetry, and Sidney's reply to the critics of poetry.

(4) Remarks on the state of contemporary English poetry, and drama—Sidney's objection to Tragi-Comedy and the violation of the Unities.

(5) Remarks on Style, Diction ahd Versification.

## Its Permanent Value

Doubts have been expressed regarding the permanence of Sidney's *Apology for Poetry.* It has been said that attacks on poetry, such as that of Gosson, are now things of the past, and so apologies or defences of poetry are no longer needed. Therefore, it is said that Sidney's *Defence of Poetry* has lost all significance. But this is far from the truth. Sidney has not only ably defended poetry from Puritan attacks, he has also thrown valuable light on the nature and function of poetry. The poet's task though called 'imitation', is not to represent this world as it is seen by our imperfect eyes, but to 'figure forth' a 'nature' of a higher order, re-creating in his imaginative mind the world as it may have existed in the Creator's mind. This doctrine, ambitious and humble at the same time, is not only crucial to an understanding of Sidney's life and writings, but also indicates how poetry could cease to be regarded as a mere rhetorical art. In the *Defence*, the limitless scope of poetry has been defined more clearly than had ever been done by any Englishman before. He has brilliantly summarised the Elizabethan literary *milieu.* Sidney's treatise is, therefore, a landmark in English literary history and a key to the understanding of Elizabethan literary theories.

1. Why should Poetry be valued:
2. Kinds of Poetry and their usefulness:
3. Sidneys Reply to Critics:
4. Sidneys objection to Tragi-Comedy:
5. Style, diction and versification:

Sidney is the father of literary criticism in England -

# 4

# A General Estimate of Sidney as a Critic— His Achievement and Influence

*Or*

## *The 'Apology' as an "Epitome of Renaissance Criticism"*

---

**Fusion of Classicism and Romanticism** (Introduction of Aristotelianism in England).

Sidney's *Apology for Poetry* is a work of genius, a rare and valuable critical document. Among the manifold achievements of Sidney as a critic, one of the most important is the introduction of Aristotelianism into England. Says **Spingarn**, "The introduction of Aristotelianism into England was the direct result of the influence of the Italian critics; and the agent in bringing this new influence into English letters was Sir Philip Sidney." His *Defence of Poesy*, "is a veritable epitome of the literary criticism of the Italian Renaissance; and so thoroughly is it imbued with this spirit, that no other work, Italian, French, or English, can be said to give so complete and so noble a conception of the temper and the principles of Renaissance criticism". For the general theory of poetry, its sources were the critical treatises of *Minturno* and *Scaliger*. Yet without any decided novelty of ideas, or even of expression, it can lay claim to distinct originality in its unity of feeling, its ideal and noble temper, and its adaptation to circumstance. Sidney is the harold of Neo-classicism in England, but his treatise is also a piece of creative literature romantic to the core. **Wimsatt and Brooks** emphasise the note of romance in the *Apology* and write, "*The sources of Sidney's 'Defence' were classical, but the spirit was not very sternly classical. Sidney sends up the joyous fireworks of the Italianate Renaissance. His colours are enthusiastic, neo-Platonic, the dual purple and gold. The motion is soaring. He is essentially a theorist of the exuberant imagination.*" His romanticism is also seen in his appreciation of

when Italian Influence replaced by French

Creative Literature was romantic
Criticism classical -

the ballad of *Chevy Chase*, which he says has always moved his heart like a trumpet. *He thus illustrates the dual Renaissance tendency, i.e. the simultaneous presence of the romantic and the classic.* Creative literature in the age was romantic, while criticism was mainly classical. As a matter of fact, Sidney's *Apology* is a synthesis of the critical doctrines of Plato, Arisototle, Horace, Scaliger, Minturno, and a host of other writers and critics. It brings together, and interprets and comments upon, all that was characteristic in the theories of literature, current at the time.

## Sidney's Empiricism

Sidney's *Defence of Poetry* is the earliest attempt to deal with the poetic art, practically and not theoretically. His judgments are based on contemporary literature and show ample of good sense and sound scholarship. It is not merely empty, abstract theorising; apart from the unities, and his dislike of tragi-comedy, his judgment are not goverened, to any great extent, by rules and theories. His ultimate test is of a practical kind, *i.e.* the power of poetry to move to virtuous action. -'*The first sign of literary appreciation is to feel; and not the least of Sidney's achievement as a critic was the early recognition of that fact*''—(**Atkins**). He has thus contributed to the appreciation of literature in the concrete. His treatises is the key to an understanding of Elizabethan poetry and poetic theory.

Key to understanding Elizabethan Poetry.

## His Practical Criticism

Sidney's practical criticism is constructive and his work contributes great deal to a better understanding of literary values. He calls attention to literary excellencies of more than one kind. He has enthusiasm for Biblical literature and finds much merit, unlike the other humanists of the day, in medieval literature. He appreciates Chaucer and the ballad of *Chevy Chase*. He appreciates *Gorboduc* and is critical of contemporary poets and dramatists. In many ways, Sidney inaugurated a new era in the history of English literary criticism. His treatise is a landmark in the history of literary criticism in England. More truly than Dryden he is the father of literary criticism in that country. father of Literary Criticism - more than Dryden

## An Epitome of Renaissance Criticism

His *Apology*, as mentioned above, is an epitome of Renaissance criticism. In every one of his views, on the nature and function of poetry, on the three unities, on Tragedy and Comedy, on Diction and metre, he represents contemporary trends. Everywhere his work reflects the influence of Aristotle and Plato, of Scaliger and Minturno, and other classical, Italian and French critics. He constantly cites the authority of Aristotle, Horace, and the Italian critics of the Renaissance in support of his views. But this does not mean that it is a mere summary of classical and Italian doctrines. Sidney's originality lies in the skill with which he has drawn upon,

Influence of Aristotle, Plato, Scaliger, Minturno -

selected, arranged and adapted earlier ideas, and then has put forth his own ideas, independently arrived at. He makes use of (*a*) Italian critics, (*b*) classical critics, Plato and Aristotle, (*c*) Roman critics, Horace and Pultarch, (*d*) he also shows the influence of medieval concept of tragedy, and (*e*) his didactic approach to poetry is typically Renaissance approach. Poetry was valued not for its delight, but for its moral effect and practical utility in actual life. However, he is original in his emphasis on the transport of poetry. Poetry teaches by moving us to virtuous action. In fact, throughout, his conclusions are his own, the result of reflection and wide reading. What he writes bears the stamp of his personality.

## Sidney's Justification of Poetry

In the *Apology*, he has (*a*) boldly faced the traditional objections against poetry, (*b*) he has claimed for poetry, a high place in intellectual and social life, (*c*) by his unique vindication of poetry, he has restored to it something of its ancient prestige and meaning, and (*d*) by his defence of poetry, he brought enlightenment and assurance to his own generation.

## His Style

His manner of presentation, his freshness and vigour, are characteristically his. His style has dignity, simplicity, concreteness, and a racy humour and irony. It is an illuminating piece of literary criticism, as well as a fine piece of creative literature.

## His Dramatic Criticism

Dramatic criticism in England began with Sidney. To him goes the credit of having formulated, for the first time, more or less in a systematic manner, the general principles of dramatic art. As a French critic writes, Sidney's *Defence of Poetry*, "gives us an almost complete theory of neo-classical tragedy, a hundred years before the *Art Poetique* of Boileau". Sidney is unique as a critic. He is judicial, creative and original. Hence the value of his work for all times to come.

## Sidney as the Father of English Criticism

To quote **Visvanath Chatterjee**, "Sir Philip Sidney is the father of English criticism just as Geoffrey Chaucer is the father of English poetry. **Dr. Johnson's** dictum that Dryden is the father of English criticism seems unacceptable. Dryden came later and drew his inspiration from the English critical tradition established by Sidney. Dryden is a very important critic, no doubt; but to be just to him we need not be unjust to Sidney. In a sense, Sidney also was living in a time which may be termed 'misty'; and, like Chaucer, he, too, could see much more clearly than his contemporaries. Though he generally followed the neo-classical creed of Renaissance criticism, more or less faithfully, there are times when he gloriously heard the old song of Percy and Douglas that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet."

Sidney's predecessors in the field of English criticism like Eliot. Wilson or Ascham cannot be regarded as full-fledged criticis because of the narrowness of their outlook which made them confine their attention to the discussion of the formal aspects of literature only. Their works are, mostly, monuments of dullness. Real criticism, or 'right' criticism, as Sidney would have put it, began in England with Sir Philip Sidney, and this was an auspicious beginning. So far as English critical literature is concerned, Sidney inherited no tradition; he helped to create one for his successors.

**His influence**

He was the first to make current trends in European art theory available in England, and in the English language. The indebtedness of all successive critics to Sidney's work is, indeed, great. Apart from its influence on the creative writers of the Elizabethan age, Sidney's treatise showed the way to later criticism, the neo-classical as well as the romantic. The neo-classical critics made a fetish of his views on the observance of the unities, and the romantic critics, like Shelley, drew inspiration from its fountains for supporting their theory of creative imagination: Even to the modern readers it continues to charm 'with its idealism, its sanity, its humour, and its grace.'

1. Dryden came later and drew inspiration from Sir Philip Sydney— Dryden is a very important Critic—

2. Sidney's treatise showed the way to later Criticism— neo-classical as well as Romantic—

① Poetry was valued not for its delight but for its moral effect and practical utility in actual life—

② Poetry teaches by moving us to virtuous actions.

# 5

# *Critical Synopsis of Sidney's "Defence of Poetry"*

*Or*

*"A Defence of Poetry" at a Glance*

---

### 1. Introductory

Sidney justifies his own praise of poetry, by citing the example of John Pietro Pugliano who praised horses and horsemanship very highly.

### 2. Antiquity of Poetry (Has preceded other branches of learning)

Poetry in all nations has preceded other branches of learning. It was poetry which gradually enabled man to read and understand learning of other kinds. Poets are "the father of learning", and so must be respected for their antiquity. Philosophers and historians have, in the beginning, appeared under the mask of poets. The beauty of Plato's works depends upon poetry.

### 3. Poetry : Its Universality

Poetry has flourished in all ages and countries. Even the uncivilised, like the Turks and the Tartars, love poetry which softens their hard hearts. Even the Red Indians love poetry, and it sharpens their wits.

### 4. Poetry : Its Long Continuity

Poetry is long lasting. It begins early in the history of a nation, and lasts the longest.

### 5. Universal Veneration of Poets and Poetry

Both the Greeks and the Romans honoured poets. The Roman's called the poets 'Vates' which means a seer or a prophet, and in

Romans called the
poets vates' seer or a
prophet:

Greek word "Poet" means master or maker:

Greek the word 'Poet' means *Maker* or Creator. The poet is a '*maker*', a creator in the real sense of the term, for while all other arts are tied to Nature, the poet is not a slave to Nature. He is truly creative ; "Only the poet, disdaining to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, does grow, in effect, into another nature, in making things either better than nature brings forth, or, quite new forms such as never were in nature, as the heroes, demigods, cyclops, chimeras, furies, and such like ; so as he goes hand in hand with nature, not enclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely ranging only within the Godioe of his own wit. Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry as divers poets have done ; neither with pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet-smelling flowers nor whatsoever else may make the too much loved earth more lovely ; her world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden." The poet alone can fashion a perfect lover, a perfect friend, and a perfectly valiant man, even though they are not found in Nature.

Oracles of Delphos — Prophesies of Sibylla — in verse.

That the poet is a prophet is clearly brought out by the fact that the oracles of Delphos and the prophesies of Sibylla were delivered in verse. The Psalms in *The Bible* are nothing but songs. In the *Bible* there is much that is imaginative and fictitious, and it is imagination which is the distinguishing characteristic of poetry.

When poet have been honoured in this way, when the Holy David himself is a poet, it would be wrong to condemn poets and poetry.

### 6. Definition of Poetry : Its Nature and Function

Poetry is an art of imitation. It is representing, counterfeiting or figuring forth. Poetry is "speaking picture" so to say, and its end is to teach and delight.

### 7. The Divisions of Poetry : No Harm in any of Them

1. Religious
2. Philosophical } of Poetry
3. True

Sidney divides poetry into three broad divisions—religious poetry, philosophical or informative poetry, and the right or true kind of poetry. Religious poetry praises God and so there can be nothing wrong in it ; philosophical poetry imparts knowledge of philosophy, history, astronomy etc. It is also not to be condemned, for it is "the sweet food of sweetly uttered knowledge."

The third kind of poets are the 'makers' in the real sense of the world. This right kind of poetry may be further sub-divided into heroic, lyric, tragic, comic, satiric, iambic, pastoral, etc. (*i*) Pastoral Poetry deals with the lowliest life and thus arouses sympathy and admiration for simple life, and hatred for acts of cruelty and tyranny, (*ii*) Elegiac poetry arouses sympathy for the suffering and the miserable. It softens the heart. (*iii*) Satire laughs folly out of court. (*iv*) Comedy is an imitation of common errors in a ridiculous fashion, and so is effective in warning men against such errors (*v*) Tragedy reveals the wickedness of men in high places and brings home to men the uncertainty of life. (*vi*) Lyric hymns the praise of men and God and thus enkindles virtue and courage, and (*vii*) The Epic. He calls epic poetry as, "the best and the most accomplished kind of poetry" in which heroic and moral goodness is most effectively portrayed. It presents pictures of heroic men and heroic action, and thus inspires men to heroic action.

There can be no evil in poetry, for there is none in any of its kinds.

## 8. The End of Learning is Best Served by Poetry

All learning virtuous action— Poetry serves it best.

Poetry is superior to all other branches of learning. Sciences like Astronomy, mathamatics, etc., are sub-ordinate sciences, for they do not serve the true end of all learning which is self-knowledge and which leads to well-doings, and not merely to well-knowing. The end of all learning is virtuous action, and poetry best serves this end.

In this respect poetry is superior, both to history and philosophy. Philosophy presents merely abstract precepts, which cannot be understood by the young. History deals with concrete facts or examples of virtue, but from these facts the readers must themselves derive universal or general truths. But poetry combines both these advantages. It presents universal truths, like philosophy, but it does them through concrete examples, like History. Its general truths can be easily understood, for they are conveyed through examples, and its examples are drawn from an ideal world and so are more vivid and effective. It teaches us virtue in a way intelligible even to the ordinary men.

## 9. Poetry Conducive to Good Action

(Truths conveyed beautifully)

Poetry does not merely give us a knowledge of virtue, it also moves us to virtuous action This is so because its truths are conveyed in a delightful manner : it allures men to virtue, and holds the attention by its manifold charms. It does not merely show the way, but also gives it so sweet a prospect as will entice any man to follow it. It wins the mind from wickedness to virtue. It alone of all the arts and sciences leads to virtuous action. Sidney stresses this transport or moving of poetry, and claims that it teaches more perfectly than either history or philosophy.

## 10. Poetry : Its Criticism in General : Sidney's Justification

There are certain critics who merely laugh and scoff at poetry, without bringing any definite charges against it. Such critics are to be ignored, for they are confused and incoherent and do not know what they say. They are merely humorous kind of jesters.

## 11. Sidney's Justification of Verse and Rhyme

It has been said that poetry is mere "rhyming and versifying". Sidney points out that rhyme is not the 'essence' of poetry, but it is desirable to use it, for (*i*) it is a polish to speech, (*ii*) Scaliger had defended issues. (*iii*) it regulates verbal harmony, and imparts order and proportion so pleasing to men, (*iv*) it adds to words the sensusous and emotional quality of music, and (*v*) it is an aid to memory.

## 12. Poetry : Four Specific Charges : Sidney's reply

(waste of Time)

Poetry is useless and so is a waste of time. "There are other more fruitful knowledges, a man may better spend his time in them than in poetry." To this charge, Sidney replies that poetry is conducive to virtuous action, and he has amply demonstrated this in the foregoing parts of his Defence.

(mother of Lies)

Poetry is "the mother of lies". To this Sidney replies that the poet, "nothing affirms and, therefore, he never lieth", for to lie is to affirm what is not true. The Historian can lie for he affirms facts, but not the poet for he does not deal with what is, but with what should be or should not be. He offers not fact but fiction, yet fiction embodying truths of an ideal kind.

(corrupting influence)

Poetry has a wanton or corrupting influence. It makes men effiminate. It is infected with love-theme and so fills the mind of men with "pestilent desires". Sidney concedes that in much of modern poetry there was a "vicious treatment of love", but love itself is not bad, for it shows an appreciation of Beauty. The fault lies not with poetry, but with the contemporary abuse of poetry. The abuse of poetry should not lead to a condemnation of poetry itself.

(Indulging in day dreaming).

As regards its debitilating influence, that it fosters in men a desire to indulge in fancy, and day-dreaming and "a disinclination to act", that it weakens the moral fibre, Sidney replies that poets 'have been companions to camps' since times immemorial, and martial men have always admired them. Moreover, if this is a fault it is a fault common to learning, and not to poetry alone. On this ground all books should be denounced. As a matter of fact, poetry is more free from this fault, than other branches of knowledge for poetry has always been used to move men to heroic action. Sidney gives numerous examples from literature and history to prove the point.

As regards the charge that Plato had banished poets from his ideal commonwealth, Sidney replies that Plato was not against poetry, but the abuse of poetry. He points out that Plato held poets in high esteem and regarded him as, "*a light and winged and scared thing*". Moreover, Plato himself was a born poet, and a large part of his *Dialogues* is poetic. In his *Ion* "he gives high and rightly divine commendation unto poetry". There he speaks of poetry as divine inspiration. Sidney thus provided a timely reply to the denunciation of poetry based on Plato's authority.

Plato calls poetry as divine inspiration –

## 13. Contemporary English Poetry and Drama : Reasons for its Decline

There is a general decline of poetry and drama in the age. Sidney lists the following reasons for its decline. (Peaceful years)

(*a*) Peaceful years have bred a tame and sluggish generation devoid of the ardent and generous spirits necessary for poetic creation.

(Poetry requires genius)

(*b*) Poets are base people and servile wits, worldly and uninspired. Poetry requires genius, but genius was lacking in the age.

Ignorance of Poetic Art.

(*c*) There is widespread ignorance of poetic art. Poets have neither knowledge, nor imitation of sound models, nor constant exercise or practice.

(*d*) *Faults of contemporary tragedy—Sidney's Condemnation.* Sidney's conception of tragedy is a mixture of medieval tradition and the concept of Aristotle, as interpreted by the Italian and French critics, like Scaliger, Minturno and Castlevetro. Following Scaliger, he regards the function of tragedy as, 'admiration and commiseration'. He also follows medieval tradition (and says that tragedy should show the fall of tyrants.) Following Castlevetro, he insists on the observance of the unities for which there is no warrant in Aristotle. He condemns modern tragedy for the incongruous mingling of the comic and the tragic and the gross violation of the unities. He gives many examples of absurdities which result from the violation of the three unities. He pours ridicule on contemporary tragedy. The only tragedy he praises is *Gorboduc* which has the elevated style and eloquence proper to tragedy, but it, too, violates the unities. He commends the example of the Ancients and advises the dramatists of his age to plunge into the middle of their stories, and to report much more than they represent. He insists on verisimilitude, though Aristotle had permitted 'convincing improbability'. Sidney's insistence on the unities proved a stumbling block in the way of later dramatic criticism.

(*e*) *Condemnation of tragi-comedy.* As regards the mingling of the tragic and the comic, he allows it in certain rare circumstances when it is not incongruous. Otherwise, it is to be avoided. He writes, there should be no mingling of kings and clowns, of "hornpipes with funerals".

(*f*) *Faults of contemporary comedy.* He condemns contemporary, farcical comedy, and is in favour of a comedy of a more intellectual kind. He distinguishes between, "laughter", and, "delight", and confutes the current notion that there could be no delight without laughter. Delight is permanent ; laughter is merely scornful tickling. This is an instance of his originality, it is a reasoned and psychological treatment of the whole issue.

He further points out that comedy should have nothing to do with painful deformity and things evil and vicious. They may

Comedy can cause laughter but not delight

cause laughter but they cannot give delight. The proper material for comedy are the weaknesses, follies and foibles of mankind of a harmless kind.

### 14. Love-Poetry : Its Faults

Contemporary love-poetry is equally degenerate. It is cold and unmoving. Its style is ornate and unnatural, entirely unsuitable for the expression of passion.

### 15. Diction of Contemporary : Poetry Its Faults

Poets use far-fetched words and images. They are fond of puns and word-play. They write an ornate, pompous style which instead of clarifying bewilders and confuses the readers. It does neither convince nor persuade. They use art to show art while art should be used to conceal art. True art lies in concealing art.

### 16. Remarks on Versification : Superiority of English

As regards versification, Sidney is of the view that the English language is superior to other continental languages, that it is fit both for the classical system of quantitative versification, and the contemporary system of qualitative versification based on accent and rhyme. Similarly, they also have the 'Caesura' or the breathing space in the middle, which neither the French nor the Italian, nor the Spanish have.

English is capable of all the three kinds of rhyme—the male (in which only the last syllable of a word rhymes), the female (in which last two syllables rhyme), and the *Sdrucciola* (in which three syllables rhyme). In this respect it is superior to other European languages.

In his remarks on versification, Sidney shows the typical Renaissance concern with the problems of rhyme and metre, and the attempts to introduce classical metres into English. It must be remembered that he was a member of the *Aeropagus*, a society of poet-scholars with the professed aim of introducing classical metres into England.

### 17. Conclusion

Sidney now sums up what he has said in the foregoing sections of his *Apology*. He has established the superiority of Poetry over other branches of learning and also shown that it both instructs and delights, and it delights by moving the readers. With great skill he has refuted the charges of its critics and proved them to be baseless. Poets are inspired by 'divine fury', poetry has a 'divine music', and it confers immortality upon its votaries. Every line of the *Apology* brings out Sidney's exalted conception of poetry, and the full faith he has in its greatness and glory.

Sidoney and
Edward wattoon at
the court of Emperor
of Vienna
meet John Pietro Pulgliano
i one should love one's
Parfession" —
So Sidney promptw

# 6

# Detailed Critical Summary of Sidney's "Defence of Poetry"

## Introduction : Praise of One's own Profession Justified

Once in 1574, Sidney and Edward Wotton were both together at the court of the Emperor in Vienna. There, they learned horsemanship from John Pietro Pugliano, the officer in charge of the royal stables. Not only did he show his skill in handling a horse but also talked a lot on the art of horsemanship. He praised horsemanship highly and said that soldiers are the noblest part of mankind, and horseman the noblest of soldiers. They are the masters of War and Ornaments of peace. They triumph both in Camps and Courts. There is no better quality in a prince than horsemanship. A prince should be an expert horseman. Horsemanship for him is of prime importance, skill in Government is only secondary. He praised the horse as a pearless beast, a beast of great beauty, faithfulness and courage. Pugliano praised horsemanship and the horse so much that, says Sidney humorously, he himself wanted to become a horse.

man Should love his Profession—

From Pugliano, Sidney learned the valuable lesson that a man should love his own profession. He was provoked to write in praise of his vocation, *i.e.* that of a poet. He wanted to defend the profession of a poet and also poetry, which had fallen low in his own age, It had become a laughing stock of children. He wanted to save it from scorn.(If the art of horsemanship can be so highly praised as was done by Pugliano, poetry surely has better claims for praise and defence.) r. Imp:

## Antiquity and Universality of Poetry

(Stephen Gosson i School for Abuse)

After this brief introduction, Sidney comes to his main theme, *i.e.* the defence of poetry against the Puritan attacks on it. Sidney defends poetry on the ground that it is the oldest and the earliest

Poetry has been the first-light given to ignorance

form of composition. In all nations and languages, it has been the first light given to ignorance. It has also been the first nurse to give milk to her children to enable them to feed afterwards on tougher knowledge. It has helped people to learn more difficult languages, ideas and thoughts. It is, therefore, ingratitude on the part of the people to condemn poetry. Sidney names a number of ancient poets, of Greece, Rome and Italy, to show that before these poets nothing good was ever written. In Greece Musacus, Homer and Hesiod were great poets. Amphion is said to have moved stones with his poetry to built. Thebes, and it is said Orpheus was listened to even by beasts and stony-hearted people. Lirius Andronicus and Ennius were great Roman poets. In the Italian language Dante, Boccaccio and Petrarch are great poets and they preceded other writers and scholars. In English also Gower and Chaucer were the first poets, whom everybody else, in every other kind of learning, has but followed.

Poets of Greece, Rome and England Italy.

Earliest of all branches of learning.

Poetry is the earliest of all branches of learning. In Greece for a long time even the philosophers appeared under the mask of poets. Thales, Empedocles and Permenides wrote their natural philosophy in verse. Pythagoras and Phocylides gave their moral councels in verse, and Tyrtacus sang of war matters and Solon of matters of policy. That Solon was a poet is seen in the fact that he wrote his story of the *Atlantic Island* in verse. It is a utopia and Plato followed his method in his *Republic*. Plato himself was a poet. He penned poetical dialogues to teach his philosophy. Plato's dialogues with the citizens of Athens are the master-pieces of poetry; they are the flowers of poetry.

Plato wrote his dialogue in poetry.

Earliest forms of writing.

Poetry is the earliest form of writing. Even the early writers of history used the fashion and manner of poets. The historians succeed most when they use the method of poets, though they deal with truth and reality and poets with fiction. Herodotus was a great historian, but he entitled his history after the name of the Nine Muses. He described, like a poet, the passions of men and the details of battles. He put such passionate speeches in the mouths of great kings and captains as only a poet can write. The philosophers and the historians became popular in ancient times, only if they used the manner and form of poetry.

historians succeed most when like Poets.

### Poets Honoured by All Peoples and Nations

(Turkish, Red Indians and the Irish) Indians

Sidney points out that even in barbarous and uncivilized countries poetry is respected and loved. Turkey is one of the uncivilized nations, but there besides their law giving divines, they have no other writers except the poets. Ireland is another country where learning is not advanced, but there also, poets are honoured. Even amongst the Red Indians where writing is unknown, poets are loved and respected. The Indians sing songs in praise of their ancestors' deeds and their gods. According to Sidney, if ever learning comes to them it will be because their dull wits have been softened and

Earliest-people 80 to
used Poetry bard is.
call Poets [illegible]

sharpened by the sweet delights of poetry. The ancient Britons also had their poets and called them Bards. Such is the antiquity of poetry. Even in uncivilized countries, poetry enjoyed great popularity. To attack poetry, therefore, is not justified.

## The Poets as 'Vates' or 'Prophets'

(Romans - vates)

Could foretell fortunes —
Poetry has divine force —

Having shown the antiquity of poetry, Sidney tells us of the respect the poets enjoyed in ancient times. The Romans had great respect for poetry and the poets. Their name for a poet was 'Vates' which means "a diviner, a foreseer or a prophet". The Romans gave this heavently title to heart-ravishing poetry. The Romans thought that great poetry could foretell their fortunes. They also believed that spirits were commanded by Verses, as those of Virgil. The oracles of Delphos an Sibylla's prophecies were delivered in Verses. It was believed that poetry has some 'divine force'.

David's Psalms in verse.

It was quite reasonable for the Romans to call poets *Vates* or prophets, for prophets have always been poets. For example, holy David's *Psalms* are divine poems, David's handling of his prophecy is poetical. There are poetical fictions, as God comming in his majesty, and the joyfulness of the beast and hills at His appearance. Sidney, therefore, says that poetry must not be ridiculed and must find a place in the church of God, as it has been an instrument of religion.

## The Poets as 'Makers'

Astronomers, mathematicians,
Physician all subordinate to nature.

The Greeks also honoured poets. They called a poet 'a maker'. The origin of the word poet is *Poiein*, which means to make. Englishmen have joined the Greeks, in calling the poet 'a maker'.

Sidney points out that all arts imitate nature. The astronomer imitates nature ; he looks at the stars, sees their movements and sets down the order in which they move. The Geometrician and Arithmetician also study the movements and forms of the objects of nature. The musician tells you of natural harmonies. The natural philosopher studies nature and the moral philosopher studies natural Virtues, Vices and passions of men. His advice is follow nature and "thou shalt not err". The Lawyer tells us what men have decided and determined and the historian what men have done. The Grammarian prescribes the rules of speech, the rhetorician and logician give us rules of rhetoric, all based upon nature. The physician tries to find out the nature of a man's body. Metaphysic deals with abstract notions and, therefore, is called supernatural, but he also depends upon nature for his study.

But the poet does not accept any such subjection. The poet creates another nature, by representing things either as better than nature, or quite new. He creates forms such as never were before in

Poet- Creates new nature as was never seen before

Poet from Greek word "Poiein"

nature. His heroes, Demigods, Cyclops, Chimeras, Furies etc. are his own original creations and superior to the forms found in nature. The poet as creator is the equal of nature and never her sub-ordinate. The poet makes more pleasant rivers, more beautiful and more fruitful trees and sweeter-smelling flowers than are found in nature. Nature never set forth the earth in so rich a tapestry as diverse poets have done. The poet makes the beautiful earth more lovely. *Nature's world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden.* Nature never created such a lover as Theagenes or such a constant friend as Pylades. Likewise, she never created men so valiant as Orlando, so right a prince as Xenophon's Cyrus, so excellent a man as Virgil's Aeneas.

Sets forth people for others to copy.

Further, the poet's creations are not wholly imaginative. He does not build Castles in the air, so to say. He does not only imitate nature in creating his friends, lovers, kings, princes etc., but also shows the way in which the world can acquire such qualities by following the examples of virtue the poet has set before it. The poet with the force of a divine breath brings things forth far surpassing the creations of nature. Nature can by no art produce a better man than a poet and it is, therefore, right to say that the poets are *makers*, divinely inspired.

### The Definition of Poetry

( "Is an art of imitation"

Imitation of Nature - function to teach and delight

After considering the antiquity of poets and poetry, Sidney comes to the definition of poetry. He says "Poesy therefore is an art of imitation". Aristotle also called poetry "Mimesis". Mimesis means "a representing, counterfeiting or figuring forth". Metaphorically speaking, it means a speaking picture; with this end to teach and delight. Thus according to Sidney, poetry is an imitation of nature, and its function is to teach and delight.

Davids Psalms -
Solomons - Moses -

### Poetry : Its Three Broad Divisions

Religious Poetry

Sidney now takes up the question of the kinds of poetry. There are three board divisions of poetry. *First is religious poetry,* both in excellence and antiquity. The poets imitate the incomparable virtues of God. Such are David's *Psalms*, Solomon's *Song of Songs* and *Proverbs*; the *hymns of Moses* and *Deborah* are examples of religious poetry. To this list some would (though wrongly) add the names of Orpheus, Amphion, Homer and many other Greek and Roman poets. *Psalms* are sung when the people are merry or to bring comfort and consolation to the dying persons suffering their last agony.

Moral Poetry.

*The second broad kind of poetry is philosophical or moral poetry.* It may deal with matters philosophical or moral or natural or astronomical or historical. Tyrtaeus, Phocylides and Cato were moral poets Lucretius and Virgil taught natural philosophy through verses. Manilus and Pontanes were astronomical poets and Lucan was a

Poet is a [illegible] - They enjoy full freedom of Inventions. They imitate to teach and delight -

historical poet. Poetry of this kind imparts knowledge in a sweet, pleasant manner.

Imaginative treatment (of life and nature) -

*The third broad division of poetry is poetry in the real sense. This right kind of poetry is an imaginative treatment of Life and nature*. Sidney suggests that the difference between the right poets and the philosophical or informative poets is the kind of difference we find between the meaner sort of painters and the really good painters. The right kind of poets enjoy full freedom of invention. They imitate to teach and delight. They imitate and borrow nothing of what is, hath been or shall be, but what may be and should be, is always under their consideration. Sidney remarks, "These be they that, as the first and most noble sort may justly be termed 'vates'. They are poets or makers in the real sense. They imitate both to delight and teach, and delight to move men to take that goodness in hand from which, without delight, they would fly as from something dangerous. The poets move people to make them know what goodness is, and this is the aim of all learning. Still there are idle tongues that bark at them, *i.e.* criticise them."

## Right Kind of Poetry : Rhyming and Versing Not Essential to It

Sidney has sub-divided the right kind of poetry into *Heroic, Lyric, Tragic, Comic, Satiric, Iambic, Elegiac, Pastoral*, etc. The greatest part of poets have clothed their poetical inventions in Verse. But Verse (or metre) is an ornament of poetry and no cause to it. Verse makes Poetry more beautiful and more sweet, but it is not an essential part of poetry. "There have been many most excellent poets that never versified, and now swarm many versifiers that need never answer to the name of poets." Both Xenophon who made a perfect Heroical Poem or epic, and Heliodorus who has given us sweet pictures of love, wrote in prose. ((These examples show that it is not rhyming and versing that makes a poet)) ..no more than a long gown makes an advocate, who though he may plead in armour would still be an advocate and not a soldier. The Poet in fact makes notable images of Virtues and Vices with that delightful teaching which is the quality which distinguishes him from others. Most of the poets have chosen to write in verse, but verse is not necessary to poetry.

Verse not necessary to Poetry.

(Purifying of our wit)

## Poetry Superior to other Branches of Learning

The aim of poetry is knowledge which means purifying of our wit, enriching of our memory, the ennobling of our judgment, and the enlarging of our conceit. Learning raises our degenerate souls to loftier heights. Poetry is superior to other branches of learning. Astronomy studies the stars and other heavenly bodies, philosophy studies the causes of things natural and supernatural. Music delights and Mathematics demonstrates. All the sciences have an objective to know, and by knowledge to uplift and elevate the human mind and soul. All the Sciences have a sub-ordinate place. They are secondary to poetry which is the highest kind of knowledge. They

Astronomy : Studies stars
Philosophy : causes of things natural : supernatural
Music : Delights
Mathematics : Demonstrates | All Sciences [illegible]

Poetry is a knowledge of well-doing and not well-knowing only –

are sub-ordinate to poetry whose aim is self-knowledge, knowledge which can be used for well-doing and not for well-knowing only. For example, the horseman's end is solidiery and the soldier must not only have the skill of soldiery but must also show that skill in actual practice. *The ultimate end of all earthly learning is virtuous action*. The learning which performs this end in the best way must be regarded as the highest kind of learning. *The poet is supreme because he delights us and moves us to virtuous action.* He is not only a giver of knowledge but also an improver and reformer of men and manners. He is the prince over all the rest.

**Philosophy and History** (Historian and moral Philosopher chief opponents –

The historian and moral philosopher are the chief opponents who challenge the supremacy of poetry. The philosophers claim that they impart the knowledge of virtue, its manifold causes and effects. In order to make one know what virtue is, they also tell him of the vices and passions which must be controlled and destroyed. Their claim is that when a man understands what virtue is, he would become virtuous in his actions. They lay down general principles to make men virtuous.

Philo. claims teaches ma[ny] virtues – to lead a virtuous action.

The historian claims superiority both over poetry and philosophy. He is laden with mouse-eaten records and depends upon other histories, which are all based on hearsay. "He is better acquainted with a thousand years ago than with the present age." He has better knowledge of the world than of his own wit. "He is curious of antiquities and inquisitive of novelties." He is a wonder to young folks and a tyrant in table talk. He claims that no man, as far as teaching of virtue and virtuous actions is concerned, is comparable to him. He claims superiority over the philosopher. He points out that a philosopher teaches a disputative virtue, while he himself teaches an active one. The philosopher's theoretical virtue is excellent in the dangerless academy of Plato but the historian's practical virtue is useful in battles like those of Marathon, Pharsalia, Poitiers and Agincourt. The philosopher teaches virtue by certain abstract considerations, but he himself teaches virtue through noble examples of those who lived in the past. Old-aged experience is more useful than the fine witted philosopher, but the historian claims that he gives the experience of many ages. The philosopher may make the song-book but he, the historian, puts the leaner's hand to the lute. If the philosopher is the guide, than he, the historian, is the light. In short, the philosopher teaches by precept; the historian teaches by examples. The philosopher is abstract while the historian is concrete. The philosopher aims at the ideal; the historian at the practical.

Historian claims that he teaches virtue through moral examples of those who lived in the past. gives exp. of many ages.

Philosopher teaches by precept – Historian by examp.

**Poetry : Superior to Philosophy**

The poet is superior both to the historian and to the moral philosopher, and much more superior to the other serving sciences. If by comparing the poet with the philosopher and historian, we

Four classes
Historian
Philosopher
Poet and lawyers.

find that he surpasses them both, we may safely conclude that no other human skill can match him. The Divine is to be excepted, for his scope is as far beyond any of the other branches of learning, as eternity exceeds a moment. The lawyer endeavours to make others right and not good. He teaches merely that man should not hurt others. He should be a good citizen even if he continues to be bad man. Therefore, he cannot be the equal of those who try to take away wickedness and make men good. Thus all these four—Historian, Philosopher, Poet and Lawyers—deal with men's manners. The lawyer as shown above cannot equal the other three. Therefore, the other three alone are to be judged and compared.

Poet-Superior to Philosopher and Historian with Precept and Example

The philosopher teaches by percept ; the historian by example. But both do not have both. Both are, therefore, defective. The poet has both—he gives the percept and also presents an example. The philosopher sets down a bare rule and gives arguments in support of it. His knowledge is based upon the abstract and the general. It is difficult to understand him and use his knowledge in practical life. The historian is found wanting in precept. He is tied down to what is and he does not tell us what should be. He studies particular examples, and not the general cause of things. The poet not only aims at what is but also at what should be. He, therefore, presents the precept which the historian does not do ; and also sets out the examples which are beyond the scope of a philosopher. He is a happy amalgam of the philosopher and the historian ; hence he is superior to each one of them.

Both functions of Philosopher and historian.

The poet is peerless and performs the functions of both the philosopher and the historian. He gives a perfect picture of someone who is supposed to have done what the philosopher says should be done and, therefore, he influences the mind more than the philosopher. He combines general principles with particular examples. He presents to the mind an image of that whereof the philosopher bestows but a wordish description. The philosopher's abstract description does not strike or possess the soul so much as poetry does. The philosopher deals with the intellect ; the poet moves the heart and soul.

Poet. Paints a picture in a most vivid form.

The philosopher with his learned definitions of virtue, vices, matters of public policy or private government, fills the mind with many definite grounds of wisdom. But this knowledge remains unused, till the poet illumines it and makes it understood by the speaking pictures of Poetry. He paints the picture of man or beast or a house in such a way that as from the picture of a painter, we can form a vivid clear idea of the object so painted. The ideal picture or image of virtue or vice painted by a poet comes before our mind's eye and at once strikes our heart and transports our soul. The force of the various passions, virtues and vices over the human heart and soul is better understood by the examples given by poets. For example, the force of patriotism can be better understood by the examples of old ~~Anchises~~ and Ulysses presented by Homer.

Aeneas

The force of anger can better be understood through the example of Ajaz than through the description of the philosophers who call it a sort of madness. There is wisdom and temperance in Ulysses and Diomedes, valour in Achilles, friendship in Nisus, remorse of conscience in Oedipus, repenting pride in Agamemnon, self-devouring cruelty in his father Atreus, the sour sweetness of revenge in Medea. All these virtues, vices and passions are presented by poets so very vividly and forcefully that we seem not to hear of them, but clearly to see through them. Each vice or virtue is presented through some forceful example which moves our heart and soul, as Philosophy can never do. A philosopher certainly, may talk of goodness in the abstract, but he cannot present a better man than the Cyrus imagined by Xenophon ; or a more virtuous man than Aeneas in Virgil. Philosophy certainly does not have that force in teaching which the feigned images of poetry have. No doubt, the poets have not acted so well as the philosophers, but this is the fault of the poets, and not of poetry. (That poetry is the best medium of teaching becomes clear from the fact that Christ himself gave feigned or poetic examples of Dives and Lazarus to warn against uncharitableness and teach the virtue of humbleness.

Philosopher- learni alone can understa

The philosopher teaches, but he teaches obscurely ; the learned alone can understand him, he only teaches them that are already taught. But the poet can be understood even by those who are not learned ; the poet is indeed the right popular philosopher. *Aesop's Tales* give good proof of it. These *Fables* make many, more beastly than beasts, hear the sound of virtue from their dumb speakers.

Poet- can be understood by the man not-taught-

**Poetry and History** Historian imagines things which were Poet- things which were not

Sidney now compares poetry and history. The poet imagines and so does the historian. But the poet imagines things that never were, the historian writes of things that were really done, and not of such as have been falsely imagined to have been done. Aristotle also in his *Poetics* has said that Poetry is more philosophical and more studiously serious than history. He gives the reason and says that "Poetry is superior because it deals with Universal considerations, and history deals with the particular. The Universal (which poetry studies) weighs what is fit to be said or done, either in likelihood or necessity, and the particular (which history studies) only marks whether Alcibiades did, or suffered, this or that." Universal is that which is true for all times and all regions under the same conditions and circumstances, the particular is that which takes places with a certain person at a certain time in a certain region. Therefore, the truth of poetry is of universal application, as that of History is not. The historian deals with facts as they are ; the poet deals with facts as they ought to be. The feigned Cyrus in Xenophon is better and more pleasing than the true Cyrus, and feigned Aeneas in Virgil is much better than the real Aeneas in the historian Dares Phrygius. It would be more pleasing to paint a Canidia with a beautiful face, than to paint the Canidia of history who had

Historians facts as they are — Poet as they ought to be -

Poets Pictures are based on truth, Coloured by his imagination -

an ugly face. The poet's pictures are not entirely false. They are based on truth coloured by the poet's imagination. The historian's picture is nothing but truth, often ugly and unpleasant, based on facts gathered from histories and antiquities.

The contrast between the historian and the poet fully brings out the poet's superiority. The poet is liberal ; the historian is rigid. The poet shows some persons who are to be liked and some others who are to be disliked. He shows in Tantalus and Atreus nothing that is not to be shunned ; in Cyrus, Aeneas, and Ulysses nothing that is not to be loved and followed. The historian, on the other hand, is bound to tell of things as they were. For example, in Alexander he shows qualities, some of which are to be liked, and some to be disliked. It is left for the reader of history to use his discretion as to which quality of Alexander is to be followed and which not. This requires discretion, and one who has discretion will not need the historian. The poet makes no such demands on the reader. By presenting the Universal, the poet leaves nothing for discretion. The historian deals with what was. To argue that what was done would also be done to-day is to argue that because it rained yesterday, it should rain today also. But the poet presents only a conjectured likelihood, things which did not actually happen, but which can happen. He works on the law of probability and possibility. The historian in his bare 'was' tells many times of events which were merely the results of chance and fortune, and not of human prudence. Many times he must tell of events of which he can give no cause. But if he gives imaginary reasons, he becomes poetical.

History leaves to discretions Poet leaves nothing to discretions.

(A feigned example of the Poet has much to teach than the true of the historian)

A feigned example as given by a poet has as much force to teach as a true example given by a historian. But the feigned exaple has much more power to more than the true example. Let us take an example from Herodotus, the poet, and Justin, the historian. Herodotus and Justin both testify that Zopyrus was the faithful servant of king Darius. When Zopyrus saw that his master was unable to overcome the rebellious Babylonians, he pretended that he had fallen in disgrace with his king. He cut off his own nose and ears and went to the Babylonians who received him warmly, supposing that his ears and nose had been cut off by the king. He was easily believed, and so he could find means to deliver the Babylonians to his king Darius. A similar story is narrated by Livy of Tarquinius and his son. Xenophon excellently imagines such another trick played by Abradates for the sake of Cyrus. But Xenophon leaves the nose of Abradates uncut, but moves us no less than Herodotus and Justin. Thus the best of the historian is inferior to the poet. The historian recites the action or quarrel, counsel, policy or stratagem as it was, but the poet beautifies it with his art, both for further teaching, and more delighting. All nature from heaven to hell is at his command, to be used in the way he likes.

Example

Such is the art of poetry, though particular artists (poets) may not rise to this great height.

People praise history and say that therein virtue is rewarded and vice punished. But this praise is more deserved by poetry than by history. Poetry always presents virtue in her best colours, making Fortune wait upon her, so that one falls in love with her. We may see Ulysses in a storm and other hard and pressing circumstances, but the poet describes his misfortunes in such a way that we feel that they are only the test of his patience and magnanimity, so that his virtues may shine the more in the prosperity soon to come. On the contrary, if evil men are presented they are to punished that none is moved to follow them. But the historian, bound to actual truth, presents examples which frighten men away from virtue and goodness, and encourage uncontrolled wickedness. In history we see valiant Miltiades rot in his fetters; the accomplished Socrates put to death like a traitor; the cruel Severus live prosperously; the rebel Caesar so advanced that his name is honoured even today. Many more names of those who have prospered in their abominable injustice or usurpation can be cited. In short, the poet "exceleth History, not only in furnishing the mind with knowledge, but in setting it forward to that which deserveth to be called and accounted good, which setting forward, and moving to well doing, indeed setteth the laurel crown upon the poet as victorious, not only of the historian, but over the philosopher, howsoever in teaching it may be questionable."

History shows wicked also Prosper -

### The 'Moving' or Transport of Poetry

(It is not knowing but doing what is the fruit of ~~history~~ knowledge

Even if it is granted that the philosopher teaches more perfectly than the poet, yet no Philosopher can equal the poet in *moving*. The poet *moves* much more than a philosopher can. And this moving is of a higher degree than teaching. This moving is both the cause and effect of teaching. One who is moved with a desire to be taught can be taught better and so one can be taught unless he is moved with the desire of teaching. If teaching can move a man to do what it teaches, then it is good teaching. If it cannot move to good doing, it is useless. For as Aristotle says it is not knowing but doing which must be the fruit of knowledge.

The philosopher certainly shows the way. He informs us of the details, as well as of the difficulties of the way, and also of the by-turnings (temptations) that may divert us from our way. But the philosopher is difficult and must be read attentively and painstakingly. In other words, he does teach only those who are already learned and can read him attentively, with studious painfulness. But such learned people do not require the light of philosophy. Moreover, philosophy does not move. We are not moved to do that which we are taught or be moved with the desire to know what we do not know. *This function of moving is performed by the poet alone. The poet, therefore, is superior to the philosopher.*

Philosopher does not move us to do things – It is the Poet alone which makes us move.

So Poet is Superior to Philosopher.

Poet not only shows the way to goodness but also gives sweet appearance of the way to be followed.

The poet is the monarch of sciences, because he not only shows the way to goodness, but gives so sweet an appearance to the way, that we are moved to follow it. He does not begin with obscure definitions as does a philosopher nor does he load the memory with examples whose truth is doubtful, as does historian. He comes to us with words arranged in delightful order, so that what he writes can easily be sung. He comes to us with such a sweet tale as keeps away children from play and old men from their sleep by the chimney-corner. So keen are all to listen to him. His purpose is to win the mind from wickedness to virtue. He gives the people that which is wholesome by dressing it in something that is pleasant and beautiful. So people gladly hear the tales of Hercules, Achilles, Cyrus and Aeneas, and through these tales also hear the right description of wisdom, valour and justice. They would not listen so attentively to the discourse of a philosopher for he teaches directly and so makes men feel that they have been sent to school once again.

Poetry imitates and, as Aristotle says, poetry makes even those things which in themselves are horrible, as cruel battles, unnatural monsters, delightful. By reading *Amadis de Gaule*, people's hearts have been moved to courtesy, liberality and courage, whoever reads in Homer the story of Aeneas carrying on his back his old father Anchises, is moved with a desire to perform a similar noble act. But as the philosopher scorn to delight, they cannot move. They wrangle whether Virtue be the chief or the only good or whether the contemplative or the active life is better. Plato and Boethuis will knew the value of moving and, therefore, they made Mistress philosophy very often borrow the masking raiment of Poesy. Even the hard hearted evil men who think virtue a school name, and who despise the instructions of the philosopher, like to be delighted. The poet promises to delight and gives them good advice in a beautiful, attractive form. Even without their knowing it, they are made to see goodness, and one who sees it must love it. The poet is certainly superior to the philosopher.

Countless proofs of the noble effect of poetry can be given but Sidney cites only two. One of the examples is of Menenius Agrippa who talked to the Romans who were quarrelling among themselves, not as a philosopher but as a poet. He told them a fictitious tale that there was a time when all the parts of the body made a mutinous conspiracy against the belly, which they thought devoured the fruits of the labour. They decided that they would let so unprofitable a spender starve. In the end, to be short with punishing the belly they punished themselves. This poetic example wrought wonderful effect upon the people so that upon reasonable conditions a perfect reconcilement took place. The other example is of Nathan, the prophet, who gave a feigned discourse about a lamb which was taken away from its master. This made David, who was guilty of murder and adultery, realise his own wickedness and return to God once again.

Menenius —
Revolt against belly
Nathan's - Sheep

Virtue the end of knowledge —
Poetry Supreme in moving towards it —

Thus it is clear that the poet with the hand of delight moves the mind more effectually than any other artist with his art does. Consequently, as Virtue is the most excellent end of all worldly learning so poetry, being the most easy and delightful in teaching that Virtue, and supreme in moving men towards it, is the most excellent work of the most excellent workman.

### The Right Kind of Poetry : Its Sub-divisions

Sidney against Combinations

Sidney now comes to an examination of the sub-divisions of the right type of true poetry. Some poets, combine two or three kinds as tragedy and comedy, and the combination is called tragi-comedy. Some have mingled prose and verse, as Sannazzaro and Boethius. Some have mingled matters heroical and pastoral. On the whole Sidney is against such combinations. Therefore, he would consider each separate kind and show that none has any fault in it.

### The Pastoral

(Through the tales of wolves and sheep the poet considers the questions of right and wrong).

*The pastoral* shows the misery of the people under hard lords or greedy soldiers. It also shows how much good can be done to the poor by the rich and the powerful. Sometimes through the tales of wolves and sheep the poet considers the questions of right and wrong. At other times it is shown that contention for trifles can get but a petty victory. Obviously, such kind of poetry can do no harm.

Harmless

### The Elegiac, The Iambic and the Satiric

The *Elegiac* moves the heart with pity. It bewails the weakness of mankind and the wretchedness of the world. It expresses pity for just causes of suffering. *The Iambic* rubs the galled mind, in making shame the trumpet of villainy, and by directly and openly attacking wickedness. *The Satiric* ridicules and by ridicule makes a man laugh at folly. At length he realises that he himself has that folly or weakness. Thus he is put to shame, and is thereby cured of that folly. It is clear that these three kinds of poetry can cause no harm. Rather, they are conducive to goodness.

### The Comic

*The Comic* has been made much odious, by wicked playwrights. In itself it is not bad. It is an imitation of the common errors of our life, which the comic poet represents in the most ridiculous and scornful way possible. The result is that no spectator would ever wish to have those follies or commit those errors.

Just as Geometry and Arithmetic present both the oblique and the right, the odds and the even, because one cannot be understood without a knowledge of the other, so comedy also imitates human errors and follies, because the beauty of virtue and goodness cannot be fully appreciated without a knowledge of evil. It presents a niggardly and miserly Demea, a crafty Davis, a flattering Gnatho, a vain glorious Thraso. It teaches man by showing the absurdities of others. It shows evil in such a ridiculous light that men want to avoid such evil. For nothing can more open a man's eye to the evil within him than to find his own actions contemptibly set forth.

**Tragedy** (It makes kings fear to be tyrants)

Tragedy teaches noble lessons:

No body can, therefore, blame the right use of comedy, nor can the high and excellent Tragedy be blamed. Tragedy opens the greatest wounds and shows forth the ulcers that are covered with tissue. It makes kings fear to be tyrants and tyrants are made to reveal their full tyranny in their actions. This results in their downfall, and thus tragedy arouses hatred for tyranny, admiration and commiseration, and this way tragedy teaches the uncertainty of this world and shows upon how weak foundations rest the power and pelf of this world. By showing the downfall of man in high position it brings tears out of the eyes even of tyrants, like Alexander Pheraeus, who was a hard-hearted man and had murdered infinite numbers, some of his own blood. (It would be absurd to dislike tragedy, which teaches such noble lessons.)

**The Lyric** (Praises virtuous actions)

The Lyric with his well tuned lyre and well accorded voice, praises virtuous acts. It sings of moral precepts and natural problems and sometimes ~~signs~~ the praises of immortal God. Sidney ironically says that perhaps he would be considered an uncivilised person if he confesses that old song of Percy and Douglas, *i.e.* the ballad of *Chevy Chase* moves his heart more than any trumpet. This ballad is rude and simple. When it can move the heart so much, how much more would it be moved by the gorgeous eloquence of Pindar. He has seen in Hungary at all feasts and meetings people singing the songs of their ancestors' valour. They consider such songs of chief kindlers of courage. The incomparable Lacedomonians do not only carry such patriotic lyrics and songs with them to the field, but even at home, they sing such songs in which the lusty men tell as what they did, the old men of what they had done when they were young and the young men of what they would do when they reach manhood. Some say that Pindar praised highly victories of no importance at all, matters rather of sport than of valour. To this charge Sidney replies that it was the fault of the poet, and not of poetry. The fault lay with the customs of ancient Greece where a victory in a tournament was valued as much as a victory in a battlefield. The Lyric itself is quite capable of arousing men from their lethargy and inspiring them to embrace warlike and noble deeds.

Sings

**The Heroic or Epic**

The heroic or epic poetry cannot be disliked, for it portrays the life and actions of such heroes as Achilles, Cyrus, Aeneas, Tur.

It portrays the heroic actions of heroes =

One makes justice and magnanimity
shine through darkness

nus, Tydeus and Rinaldo. It teaches and moves to the most high and excellent truth; it makes magnanimity and justice shine through the darkness of human fears and evil desires. It presents virtue in her most beautiful and most noble form. It is not only a kind, but the best and most accomplished kind of poetry, and all are agreed in its praise. By presenting noble example of virtue and valour it inspires men to noble actions, and also teaches them how to perform such actions. It instructs as well as delights. It moves to virtuous action, and so no fault can be found with it.

In short, the poet-whippers mislike poetry but they cannot say where the fault lies. To them the name of poetry is odious, but neither its cause nor its effects, neither poetry in general nor its separate kinds, give them any cause for their dislike.

## Poetry: The Highest Kind of Learning

Sidney concludes: Poetry is of all human learning the most ancient, and of most fatherly antiquity, for other branches of learning are descended from it. It is so universal that no civilised nation despises it. It is also found amongst the uncivilised nations. The Romans called it "prophesying"; and the Greek gave it the name of "making". It is rightly called 'making', for while other arts are confined to the objects which they imitate, the poet rises above nature and makes his own objects. Neither the poet's descriptions nor the end of poetry contain any evil, so the thing described cannot be evil. The effects of poetry are so good as to teach goodness and to delight the learners. In moral doctrine, the poet surpasses not only the historian but also the philosopher. *The Holy Scripture* in which there is nothing evil has whole parts in it which are poetical. Christ himself used poetic language. *Poetry as a whole, as well as ~~its different kinds~~ deserve all praise. Poetry is supreme in all the branches of learning, and the highest honour must go to the poet.*

## Some Superficial Criticism of Poetry

Sidney now proceeds to an examination of the specific charges brought against poetry. According to Sidney, there are certain poet-haters who seek praise by dispraising others. These critics waste their time and energy in using a number of incoherent words, retorts and scoffs, carping and taunting, at poets and poetry. Their criticism of poetry has no substance in it and so is to be ignored. They are like those witty, frivolous people who can praise the discretion of an ass, or the comfortableness of being in debt or the happiness of being sick with plague. Agrippa can show the vanity of science as Erasmus can praise folly. But Agrippa and Erasmus are superior to such scoffing critics, for they are not artificial or superficial. These critics have little knowledge and they laugh at poets out of their own folly. They are good fools, or humorous jesters, for their ridicule of poetry does not arise out of their wisdom. It is best to ignore them.

The Critics laugh at poets and poetry
out of their own folly.

One can be a poet without rhyming or versing -

## Defence of Verse and Rhyme

There are critics of poetry who call poetry "rhyming and versing" and ridicule it for this reason. Sidney holds that, "it is not rhyming and versing that maketh Poesy. One may be a poet without versing, and a versifier without poetry." Even if rhyming and versing were essential to poetry, they would be an admirable and praise-worthy part of it. They are admirable, for they polish up the language. When using verse the poet considers the forcible quality of each word as well as its measured quantity. Each word is selected both with reference to its meaning and its sound. It makes language musical and is most divine striker of the senses. Measure harmony, proportion are admirable qualities, and poetry cannot be blamed for having these qualities, unless they are regarded odious in the age. Moreover, versifying helps memory and makes reading profitable. In versifying, words are so fitted to each other that one word recalls another. It is the best medium for storing knowledge in the mind. Verse superior to prose in the knitting up of the memory. The reason is that the words are so set that even if one word is lost the whole work loses its sense. In rhymed or measured verse one word begets another. By one word, the reader can guess the following ones. Every word has its natural seat and this makes the words remembered. This is well-known and so further discussion of the point is not necessary. Every scholar carries with him some verses of Virgil, Horace or Cato, which in his youth he had learned and which ever since have been a source of knowledge to him. The rules of arts and sciences are also well remembered when they are expressed in verses. "So that, verse being in itself sweet and orderly, and being best for memory, the only handle of knowledge, it must be in just that any man can speak against it."

verses necessary for memory -

## Four Specific Charges Against Poetry

Sidney next proceeds to examine the four specific charges brought against poetry by Puritan critics like **Stephen Gosson.** They are *first*, that there being many other more fruitful branches of knowledge, a man might better spend his time in them than in poetry. *Secondly*, that poetry is the mother of lies. *Thirdly*, that it is the nurse of abuse, infecting us with many pestilent desires, making us effeminate and pleasure-loving by its siren-like sweetness. *And lastly, and chiefly*, that Plato banished poets out of his commonwealth. These are serious charges, but claims Sidney, there is no truth in them.

more fruitful branches.
Lies -
makes us pleasure seeking.
Plato banished poets.

### (*a*) Poetry not a Waste of Time

To the first objection that there are many other useful arts in which a man can employ his time, Sidney replies that Poetry teaches us and moves us to virtue much more than any other art or science can. Therefore, it is not correct to say that it is a waste of time and energy to read poetry or to write it. There is no other more fruitful branch of knowledge than poetry.

Poetry moves us to virtue and as such, is a useful art + so no waste of time.

(To lie is to affirm that to be true which is false)

### (*b*) Poetry Never Lies

( Poet is the least liar).

To the second objection that the poets are liars, Sidney replies boldly and affirms that of all writers under the sun, the poet is the least liar. Even if he so desires, he cannot lie. The astronomers and geometricians measure and affirm the height of the stars; they may be liars. The physicians may lie when they prescribe certain medicine and affirm that they are good. But the poet affirms nothing, and is, therefore, not a liar. (To lie is to affirm that to be true which is false.) The historian affirms many things and so cannot avoid being false, one time or the other. But the poet never affirms. He never conjures you to believe as true what he writes. He does not not cite authorities in support of what he says. He does not labour to tell you what is but what should or should not be. And, therefore, says Sidney "though he (poet) recount things not true, yet because he telleth them not for true, he lieth not". The poet writes things allegorically and figuratively and not affirmatively. So he does not lie. Even a child would not believe Aesop's *Fables* to be true.

affirms nothing & so is not a liar.

Poet writes fictitious names — so false +

The critics of poetry point out that the poet gives names to persons he writes of. Since the persons are fictitious, and not true or real, the poet may be said to tell lies. Sidney's answer is that the poet's naming of men is but to make his pictures more lively. Lawyers also use fictitious name, but we do not call them liars for that reason. We play chess and we give names to pieces of wood. But nobody would call us liars for this reason. Thus the poet names Cyrus or Aeneas, only to show what men of their name and fame should do.

Pictures are made lively — what these names should do —

### (*c*) Poetry—Not the Mother of Abuse

(makes man corrupt and lustful).

The third objection to poetey is that poetry abuses men's wit and makes them corrupt and lustful. They say the Comedies rather teach than control the passion of love. They say the lyric is full of passionate songs, the Elegiac poet weeps the want of his mistress and that even the Heroical, Cupid hath ambitiously entered. Thus all poetry is lustful and arouses sinful fancies. But, says Sidney, no doubt the poets write of love, but love, of beauty is not sinful. But even if it is granted, that love, lust and vanity fill the pages of poets, it merely shows that the poets are at fault, not poetry itself. Poetry does not abuse man's wit but that man's wit abuses Poetry. Fault does not lie with poetry, but with its practitioners. Sidney agrees that Man's wit abuses poetry which should figure forth good things, and not infect the fancy with unworthy objects. Poetry may not only be abused, but that being abused, it can do more harm than any other army of words. But from this it follows that if rightly used, poetry can do more good than any other branch of learning. Every branch of learning can be abused. The skill of a doctor, if abused, can do harm. The abuse of the knowledge of Law can give birth to horrible injuries. The abuse of the Holy Scripture, the word of God,

teaches passions than controls

If poets write about lust fault with Poets and not with Poetry.

Poetry does not [illegible] man's wit abuses Poetry.

Poetry in itself is not corrupt; it is the misuse or abuse of poetry which gives rise to lust & corruption

breeds heresy. So the abuse of poetry can also cause harm. Poetry in itself is not corrupt or sinful. It is the misuse or abuse of poetry which gives rise to lust and corruption. But the very fact that poetry can cause so much harm, proves its power of doing good.

### Poetry Does not Make Men Effeminate (lead them to inaction)

Poetry has been the activising factor in camps.

The critics also allege that in the past England set her heart's delight upon action, and not upon imagination. *Poetry has made Englishmen passive and effeminate*. Now instead of doing things worthy to done, they write of things fit to be done. Sidney replies that he cannot imagine the times when there was no poetry and peoples led a life of action. No memory is so ancient as has the precedence of poetry. Never were the English without poetry. The Goths also loved and respected poetry. Moreover, the argument (that poetry makes men passive) applies to all learning or bookishness as it is commonly called. Rather, it would be truer to say that the argument applies to all learning, except poetry. For in wars poetry has always played an important part. Poetry has always been the companion of the camps. Even Turks and Tartars are inspired to war-like deeds by reading poetry. Homer, a poet, flourished in Greece before Greece flourished. From him the learned men took their first light of knowledge and their active men received their first motions of courage. Even Alexander, left his teacher Aristotle, behind him, but took dead Homer (*i.e.* the epics of Homer) with him. He put the philosopher Callisthenes to death but wished Homer had been alive. He was inspired to bravery more by the example of Achilles than by reading the definition of fortitude in books of philosophy.

### (*d*) Plato did not Condemn Poetry, but the Abuse of Poetry

The critics say that Plato wanted the poets to be banished from his ideal commonwealth. Sidney has great respect for Plato, the greatest of philosophers, because he was the most poetical of all. It may be replied to the critics that Plato, being a philosopher, was a natural enemy of poets. But Sidney does not consider it a proper reply. The philosophers pick out sweet knowledge from poetry, and they ungratefully scorn the poets who teach by a divine delightfulness. The philosophers should not descredit their masters in this way. Poets have always enjoyed respect and honour. Seven cities struggled among themselves to have blind Homer as one of their citizen, while many of the cities banished philosophers as being unworthy citizens. Many Athenians had their lives saved from the Syracusans, only by repeating certain of Euripides' verses. Simonides and Pindarus so much influenced Hero, the first, that from a tyrant he became a just king. Plato and Plutarch have more filth and lust in their pages, than any poet.

Again, it may be asked out of what commonwealth did Plato banish the poets ? It was a commonwealth which allowed commu-

It was a Commonwealth which allowed enjoyment of any woman by any person -

nity of women. So effeminate wantonness must not have been the cause for which Plato wanted to banish poets, for in his commonwealth all were free to enjoy any woman they liked. St. Paul himself who has honoured poets—has condemned, not philosophy itself, but the abuse of philosophy. So Plato also is not against Poetry but against its abuse. Plato found fault with the poets of his time because they filled the world with wrong opinions of the gods by narrating merry, licentious tales about them and, therefore, Plato would not have the youth depraved by reading the works of such poets. Sidney defends the early Greek poets and says that the poets did not induce such opinions, but merely imitated those opinions which were already prevalent. All the Greek stories can well testify that the very religion of that time was based upon such stories of the gods. Many superstitions prevailed at the time. The poets were not at all responsible for this; they simply followed what was generally accepted. Plato, therefore, was not against the Poets but meant to drive out those wrong opinions of the Deity, which he supposed were nourished by the poets. He himself in his Dialogue, called Ion, gives high praise to Poetry. *So Plato banished only the abuse of poetry, and not poetry as such*. So Plato is the patron and not the adversary of poets. From the *Ion* it is clear, that he considered that poetry was the result of divine inspiration. He, therefore, praised poetry more highly than even the poets can do.

meant to drive away the abuse of Poetry

Poets have been honoured at all times in all climes. Alexander, Caesar, Scipious all favoured poets. Laelius, called the Roman Socrates, himself was a poet. Even Greek Socrates spent part of his time in old age in putting Aesop's *Fables* into verse. Plato's *Dialogues* are all poetic. Aristotle wrote the *Art of Poesy*, only because he considered it worth writing. Plutarch taught the advantages of poetry and the right way of reading. He did so because he considered poetry worthy of serious study. He has decorated his history and philosophy with poetry. So poetry is not to be dispraised. Its dispraise should be transformed into just commendation.

Thus poetry is not an art of lies, but of truth; not of effeminateness but of notable stirring of courage, not of abusing man's wit, but of strengthening it; Poets were not banished but honoured by Plato. So poets are to be highly honoured rather than to be condemned.

## The Decay of Poetry in Contemporary England

Sidney observes that England has always been the mother of poets; why it is, that in his age she has grown so hard a step-mother to poets, who surpass all others in wit. These poets are makers of themselves, they do not learn or take from others. Poesy has always been favoured by Kings, Emperors, Senators and Captains, David, Adrian, Sophocles, Germanicus. These and a thousand others not only favoured poets but they, themselves, were poets. Robert King of Sicily, the great King Francis of France, King James of Scotland

Poetry loved in all countries

why not then in England?

were all poets and patrons of poetry. Great Cardinals, as Bembus and Bibbiena, Preachers and teachers, as Beza and Melancthon ; philosophers, as Fracastorious and Scaliger, great Orators, as Pontanus, piercing wits, as Buchanan, grave councellors and many others' all not only read other's poesies but also tried to poetize for others, reading. Sidney regrets that Poesy thus loved in all ages and countries, should be so neglected and dishonoured in England. Poets flourished in England even in those war-like times when the trumpet of Mars did sound the loudest. Why should they not fiourish in peace time ?

## Reason for It—Lack of Inspiration

Sidney than gives reasons for the contemporary disgrace of poetry and poets. Poetry is now dishonoured because only servile and mean persons follow it. They are satisfied, if what they write is published. They never care for quality. Such men disgrace poetry by their own disgracefulness. Sidney calls them bastards. They have no learning and no skill. They that delight in Poesy itself should try to know what they do, how it should best be done, and should try to understand their own shortcomings. They should try to find out, if they have the necessary ability. For Poesy must not be drawn by the ears ; it must be gently led or rather it must lead. That is why the ancients have said that poetry is a divine gift, and on human skill. A poet cannot be made by hard work only ; he can be made a poet, only if he has the genius to be a poet. The highest-flying wit is guided by Deadalus who carries him up on his wings into the air of due praise and fame. *The three wings are : Art, Imitation and Exercise*. Art that is rules, imitation that is models which are to be imitated the English poets have in abundance, more than is necessary. But exercise they do not do rightly, for they think that they know, what they should make efforts or exercise to know. Continuing his advice to the poets, Sidney says that poetry has two parts—matter to be expressed in words, and words to express the matter— and in neither of the two do the poets exercise to use art and imitation rightly.

Three wings of Deadalus
① Art-
② imitation
③ Exercise

## Praise of Old English Masters

Sidney goes on to praise some works of great English masters for their matter as well as their manner of expression. Chaucer is excellent in his *Troilus and Cressida. The Mirrour of Magistrates* is also properly furnished with beautiful parts and in the Earl of Surrey's *Lyrics* there are many things worthy and noble. *The Shepherd's Calender* has much poetry in its dialogues. Few other works, besides these have poetry in them. Sidney, then, in order to show that these works are truly poetic, says that put any of them into prose and you will find that it has lost all its charm, weight and force. Their poetry when put into prose becames a confused mass of words, with a tingling sound of rhyme, with hardly any reason or sense.

① Troilus and Cressida
② mirror of magistrates
③ The Shepherd's Calender

"Gorboduc" written in Style.

## Contemporary Comedies and Tragedies—Their Faults

The contemporary tragedies and comedies deserve criticism, for they observe rules neither of civility nor of poetry. But Gorboduc is full of stately speeches and well sounding phrases. It is correctly written in the Senecan style. It is full of notable morality which it teaches delightfully and thus achieves the very end of Poesy (*i. e.* to teach and delight). But even *Gorboduc*, according to Sidney, is not a model for other Tragedies. It is faulty in its observance of the unities both of place and time, the two necessary companions of all human actions on this earth. "For where the stage should always represent but one place, and the uttermost time presupposed in it should be, both by Aristotle's percept and common reason, but one day, there is both many days, and many places, inartistically imagined."

"Gorboduc"

## Sidney's Advocacy of the Three Unities

These unities are wanting in *Gorboduc* and more so in other plays. The unity of place is most grossly violated. We find Asia on the one side and Africa on the other. The same stage is represented at many places, and an actor when he comes on the stage has to tell the audience what place it is at that particular moment. Sidney makes fun of this fault and says : "Now Ye shall have three ladies walk to gather flowers and then we must believe the stage to be a garden." The next moment we have to imagine it to be a rock, and the very next moment a cave. The violation of the unity of Time is equally gross and violent. Two young princes are first shown in love, they marry, have children, who in turn grow up, fall in love, marry and have children, and all this happens within the space of two hours. How absurd it is can very well be imagined ?

Place a Time Should be honoured

It may be asked how drama should represent a story which contains many places and many times. Sidney replies that (tragedy should be tied down to the laws of Poesy and not of History. It is not bound to follow the story, having liberty, either to imagine quite a new story, or to modify stories taken from history according to the needs of dramatic art. The unities of time and place, as well as the unity of action, may be easily observed, if many things are reported and not represented on the stage. He gives the example of the story of young Polydorus of which all should not be represented. Only a part which is by itself complete should be staged and set in action, the rest may be reported as has been done by Euripides.

## Condemnation of Tragi-Comedy

Sidney is not in favour of Tragi-Comedy. He is against all those plays that are neither right tragedies nor right comedies, but a mixture of the two. He condemns the mingling of ~~kinds~~ kings and clowns, of hornpipes and funerals. The ancients generally did not do so. They wrote either pure tragedies or true comedies. They aroused admiration and commiseration through their tragedies and delight through their comedies. The English tragedies are failures, because the mingling of the comic weakens their effect. Their comedies are mean and worthless. They are full of obscenity and clownage. They produce loud laughter, but not that delight which is the true aim of comedy.

## Distinction Between Delight and Laughter

We delight in things that are in harmony with human nature; laughter comes of things most disproportionate or contrary to human nature. Delight has permanent joy in it; Laughter has only a scornful tickling which is only momentary. We take delight, for example, is seeing a fair woman but we do not laugh at her; while we may laugh at a deformed man. Delight and laughter may come together, but it is wrong to suppose that delight is the cause of laughter. Thus comedy does hot aim merely at laughter but at the delightful teaching which is the true end of poetry. Even their laughter is caused by things sinful or things miserable, which are to be eschewed or pitied rather than to be laughed at. A busy loving courtier, a heartless, threatening braggart, a pedantic schoolmaster, or a fashion-loving traveller oddly dressed, are the true objects of that delightful laughter which teaches as well as delights.

What- delights- does not- evoke laughter-

## Contemporary Lyric

(Can be used in Praise of God or immortal Beauty)

Another kind of poetry which the English have is the lyric. It can be used for singing the praises of the immortal beauty and goodness of God. But it is used merely to express love, and even this expression of love is so cold, that if Sidney were the beloved, he would not at all be moved. Their expression of love is entirely cold, artificial and unnatural.

## Diction of Poetry

Just as matter is the inside of Poesy; diction is the outside of poetry. In diction, in their use of words, the English poets are even worse. The versifiers use far-fetched words, which are new and unfamiliar to an Englishman. Sometimes they use figures and flowers, extremely winter-starved. They are fond of puns, conceits and word-play of all sorts. They are not the true imitators of Tully and Demosthenes but are like Red Indians, who in order to appear beautiful, are not content to wear ear-rings only in the ears, the fit and natural place for ear-rings, but through them throw their noses and rings. A true poet uses words in their right place to express their right meaning to the right minds. The English poets practise art and like good courtiers speak according to art, though not by Art. Others use Art to show art, not to hide art. They, therefore, become inartistic and artificial and fail to move or persuade. Similes should be used to explain and clarify, and not to convince those of contrary opinion. They must not be used excessively, for any superfluity in their use is tedious and fatiguing to the reader.

The Purpose of language is the uttering sweetly and Properly the conceits of mind -

As regards the English language, it has words of many languages and this increases its expressive range and power. English is not bound down by the rules of Grammar. The purpose of language is the uttering sweetly and properly the conceits of the mind, and English hath this power more than any other tongue in the world.

### Versification — Two (one ancient; the other modern)

Sidney now considers English versification. There are two sorts of versifying—the one ancient, the other modern. The ancient marked the quantity of each syllable ; the modern observe only the number. The chief feature of their versification is that like sounding of words, which we call rhyme. The ancient versification is more fit for music ; but the modern with its rhyme also strikes a certain music to the ear. The English as well as the ancient versification has both sweetness and majesty and so gives delight. English is superior to other languages, for it does not need elision of vowels as does the Italian language ; nor is it too full of consonants like the Dutch language. It is superior to the French and Spanish languages also, for it does not have many of their defects.

In rhyme the English do not oberve quantity, but they observe the accent very percisely, which the other languages do not do. They are always careful to introduce Caesura or breathing place in the midst of their verse. Lastly, as regards the very rhyme itself, the Italian cannot put in the last syllable, by the French named the "masculine rhyme". They place it in the next to the last, which the French call the "female" or they place it in the next before the last two, which the Italians call *Sdrucciola.* The example for the former is *buono : suono*, of the *Sdrucciola*, *femina* ; *Semina.* The French have both the male, as *bon* ; *son*, and the female, as *Plaise* ; *taise.* It is the English alone who have all three, *due*, *true* ; *father*, *rather* : *motion*, *potion*. Thus in matter of rhyme English is superior to other languages.

### Conclusion (delightfulness which is conducive to virtue)

To conclude, Poetry is full of delightfulness which is conducive to virtue. The charges brought against it are either false or feeble. It is the fault of the poets—not true poet but poet-apes—that it is not esteemed in England. The English language is most fit to honour Poetry, and to be honoured by Poetry. Sidney, therefore, appeals to his readers not to laugh at the name of 'poets and poetry'. The poets, according to Aristotle, were the ancient treasures of the Grecians' Divinity ; they were the first bringers-in of all civility, according to Bembus. Scaliger thought that poets made men honest sooner than philosophers. It pleased God to give us all knowledge through such poets is Homer and Hesoid. There are many mysteries contained in Poetry which were written obscurely so that they may

Poets made men honest sooner than Philosophers -

not be misused by irreligious persons. Poets are the beloveds of God, and whatever they write is written under divine inspiration. They can make you immortal by their verses. In this way your name shall ever be remembered ; people will write prefaces to you, and you shall be considered to be the most fair, most rich, most wise, of all. Your soul shall be placed with Dante's Beatrix, or Virgil's Anchises. But if you do not like the planet-like music of poetry or if you have such an earth-looking mind that you cannot lift yourself up to look at the sky of Poetry, you will be in love, but will never get the favour of your beloved, because you lack the skill of writing a sonnet, and when you die, you will not be remembered for want of an epitaph.

Poets keep names
living - they are the beloveds
of Gods and write under
divine inspiration - They
make us most fair, most
rich, your soul shall be
placed with Dante's Beatrix,
or Virgil's Anchises -

When you die you shall not
want an epitaph.
=

1. Poetry first-light-giver to ignorance:
2. flourished before any other art.
3. first-Philosophers and historians were poets.
Psalms of David - Dialogues of Plato.
4. Romans called them 'vates' or Prophets.
Greeks 'makers'
Poiosein (maker).

7

5. Every nations: civilized or otherwise had poets -

# Critical Review of Sidney's 'Defence of Poetry'

## 1. Nature and Function of Poetry: Sidney's Exalted Conception of It

### Antiquity and Universality of Poetry

Sidney's *Apology* fully brings out his exalted conception of the nature and function of poetry. Says **Spingarn**, "In all that relates to the antiquity, universality, and pre-eminence of poetry, Sidney apparently follows Minturno. Poetry, as the first light-giver to ignorance, flourished before any other art or science. The first philosophers and historians were poets; and such supreme works as the *Psalms* of David and the *Dialogues* of Plato are in reality poetical. Among the Romans, the poet was regarded as a sage or prophet; and among the Greeks as a 'maker'; and no nation, however primitive or barbarous, has been without poets, or has failed to receive delight and instruction from poetry.

Every nation has poets -

### Definition of Poetry

But before proceeding to defend an art so ancient and universal, it is necessary to define it; and the definition which Sidney gives agrees substantially with what might be designated Renaissance Aristotelianism. "*Poetry*", says Sidney, "*is an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it, that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth; to speak metaphorically a speaking picture, with this end, to teach and delight.*"

### Rhyme and Metre not Essential for Poetry

Poetry is, accordingly, an art of imitation, and not merely the art of versifying; for although most poets have seen fit to apparel their poetic inventions in verse, verse is but the raiment and ornament of poetry; and not one of its cause or essentials. Rhyming and versing do not make one a poet. *"One may be a poet without*

verse is the ornament of poetry and not one of its essentials:

*versing*", says Sidney, "*and a versifier without poetry*". Speech and reason are the distinguishing features between man and brute; and whatever helps to perfect and polish speech deserves high commendation. Besides this, verse is the most fitting raiment of poetry, because it is the most dignified and compact, not colloquial and slipshod. It is also an aid to memory, for one word in it is so fitted with another that by remembering that one you re-call the other. *But with all its merits, it is not an essential part of poetry, of which the true test is this—feigning notable images of vices and virtues, and teaching delightfully.*

### Poetic Imitation : Its Nature (Speaking Picture)

Though Sidney calls poetry a "speaking picture", and thus compares poetry to painting, it soon becomes clear that his idea of poetic imitation is an exalted one. *He does not regard imitation as mere photographic representation*. Poets are *makers* or creators in the true sense of the word. As a creator, poet is second only to God, the creator of the universe.

Creates ideal and improves upon God's creation.

The poet aims at creating the ideal and sometimes improves upon God's creation : Nature's creation is brazen, the poet delivers a golden. "Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry as divers poets have done—neither with pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet smelling flowers, nor whatsoever else may make the too much loved earth more lovely." It is difficult for Nature to show as true a lover as Theagenes, so constant a friend as Pylades, so valiant a man as Orlando, so right a prince as Xenophon's Cyrus, so excellent a man every way as Virgil's Aeneas.

The poet with the help of his own invention 'doth grow another nature'. He makes things either better than Nature bringeth forth, a quite anew, forms such as were never there in Nature, as the Heroes, Demigods, Cyclops, Chimeras, Furies, and such like. He is not subject to Nature as the astronomer, geometrician, moral philosopher, lawyer or the historian is.

### Poetic Inspiration (Poets are born not-made)

The divine nature of Poetry is further suggested by the remarks of Sidney on inspiration or "divine fury" as he calls it. Poets are born, not made. For poetry must not be drawn by the ears; it must be gently led, or rather it must lead; which was partly the cause that made the ancient learned affirm it was a divine gift, and no human skill : since all other knowledges lie ready for any that hath strength of wit; "a poet no industry can make, if his own genius be not carried unto it".

Poetry is divine. Poetry is prophetic. It does not deal with things as they are or as they were. It tells us of things as they ought to be. It thus prophesies of things to come. Both the Oracles of

'Poet-Cannot be made by industry or art
It-is born genius'

Delphos and Sibylla's prophesies were wholly delivered in Verses. "For that same exquisite observing of number and measure in words, and that high flying liberty and conceit proper to the poet, did seem to have some divine force in it."

### Function of Poetry - Teaching of notable morality -

In regard to the object, or function, of poetry, Sidney is at one with Scaliger. The aim of poetry is accomplished by teaching most delightfully a notable morality ; or, in a word, by delightful instruction. Not instruction alone, or delight alone, as Horace had said, but instruction made delightful ; and it is this dual function which serves not only as the end but as the very test of poetry. The object of all arts and sciences is to lift human life to the highest altitudes of perfection ; and in this respect they are all servants of the sovereign poetry, whose end is well-doing and not well-knowing only. Virtuous action is, therefore, the end of all learning ; and Sidney sets out to prove that the poet, more than any one else fulfils this end.

### The "Moving" of Poetry

The end of all knowledge is not only to make us know what virtue is, but also to make us act in a virtuous manner. This aim poetry achieves more fully than any other branch of learning. The poet moves us to virtuous action and in this moving lies the real superiority of poetry. The poet moves us to virtuous action by placing before us perfect examples of virtuous people, by showing virtue ever triumphant over wickedness, by giving such a sweet appearance to the path of virtue that we are moved to virtuous action, despite ourselves. Thus Sidney stresses the *transport* of poetry, the power which it has to move the mind and heart of the readers.

### Conclusion

In his views on (1) poetic inspiration which he calls 'divine fury', (2) the moving or transport of poetry, and (3) imitation as a creative process, or an exploration of ideal possibilities, Sidney ceases to be a 'classic' and goes over to the other camp, the camp of the romantics.

## 2. Poetry : Its Superiority over Philosophy and History

### Exalted Conception of Poetry

Sidney had an exalted conception of poetry, and regarded it as superior both to History and Philosophy, as well as to other branches of learning. The end of all knowledge is to teach men not only what virtue is but also to make them act in a virtuous manner. Poetry fulfils this aim more perfectly, for it combines delight with teaching. It makes instruction delightful, and so moves men to virtuous action.

M.A. (Pol. Sc. Eco. Eng. His.) B.Ed.
Rajbagh
SRINAGER-190003
KASHMIR

Poet employs both precept and example.

## Poetry : Superior Both to History and Philosophy

In order to elaborate his point, Sidney compares poetry both to philosophy and history. The gist of Sidney's argument is that while the philosopher teaches by precept alone, and the historian by example alone, the poet conduces most to virtue because he employs both precept and example. The philosopher teaches virtue by showing what virtue is and what vice is, by setting down, in abstract argument, and withont clarity or beauty of style, the bare principles of morality. The historian teaches virtue by showing the experience of past ages ; but, being tied down to what actually happened, that is, to the particular truth of things and not to general possibilities, the example he depicts draws no necessary consequence. The poet alone accomplishes this dual task. What the philosopher says should be done is, by the poet, pictured most perfectly in some one by whom it has been done, thus coupling the general notion with the particular instance.

The philosopher, moreover, teaches the learned only : but the poet teaches all, and so is, in Plutarch's phrase, "the right popular philosopher". He seems only to promise delight, and moves men to virtue unawares. But even if the philosopher excel the poet in teaching, he cannot move his readers to virtuous action as the poet can, and this is of higher importance than teaching, for what is the use of teaching virtue, if the pupil is not moved to act and accomplish what he is taught ? On the other hand, the historian deals with particular instances, with vices and virtues so mingled together in the same personage that the reader can find no pattern to imitate. The poet improves upon history ; he gives perfect examples of vices and virtues for human imitation ; he makes virtue succeed and vice fail, and this history can but seldom do. Poetry does not imitate nature ; it is the reader who imitates the example of perfection presented to him by the poet. He is thus made virtuous. Poetry, therefore, conduces to virtue, the end of all learning better than any other art or science, and so deserves the palm as the highest and the noblest form of human wisdom.

## Poetry and History (Poet deals with the universal)

The basis of Sidney's distinction between the poet and the historian is the famous passage in which Aristotle explains why poetry is more philosophic and of more serious value than history. The poet deals, not with the particular, but with the universal,—with what might or should be, not with what is or has been. But Sidney, in the assertion of this principle, follows Minturno and Scaliger, and goes farther than Aristotle would probably have gone. All arts have the works of nature as their principal object of imitation, and follow nature as actors follow the lines of their play. Only the poet is not tied to such subjects, but creates another nature better than nature herself. For, going hand in hand with nature, and being enclosed not within her limits, but only by, "the zodiac of his own imitation" he creates a golden world in place of nature's brazen ; and in this sense he may be compared as a creator with God. Where shall you find in life, asks Sidney, such a friend as Pylades, such a hero as Orlando, such an excellent man as Aeneas ?

### The Nature of Poetic Truth

Poetry is superior to philosophy and history, as well as to other branches of learning, inasmuch as the poets never tell a lie. The poet nothing affirms, so he never lies, for to tell a lie is to affirm that something is what in reality it is not. The poet is the least liar of all writers under the sun. The astronomer, and the geometricians can hardly escape the charge when they take upon them to measure the height of the stars. The physicians lie when they over things good for sickness which sometimes send men to the limbo of forgetfulness. But the poet affirms nothing and, therefore, never lieth. *To lie is to affirm that to be true which is false.* The historian affirms many things which in the long run prove to be false ; so does a scientist. The poet never affirms, so he never tells a lie. 'The poet never maketh circles about your imagination, to conjure you to believe for true what he writes. He citeth not authorities of other histories, but even for his entry calleth the sweet Muses to inspire into him a good invention ; in truth not labouring to tell you what is, or is not, but what should or should not be. And, therefore, though he recount things not true, yet because he telleth them not for true, he lieth not."

### Poetic Truth : Its Basis in Reality

The poet is not tied to the particular, his truths are ideal and universal. But this does not mean that the poet merely builds castles in the air, that his truths are entirely fanciful. Even when soaring most high, he keeps his feet firmly planted on the earth. He is as much bound by the laws of probability and truth to nature as any other writer. *Reality is the basis of the ideals truth of the poet.*

## 3. Objection Against Poetry ; Sidney's Defence—Sidney's Reply to the Critics of Poetry

(Puritan-Platonic impeachment of Poetry)-

### Poetry Not Versing and Rhyming

Sidney's *Defence of Poetry* was written as a *counterblast*, to quote **Wimsatt and Brooks,** *to the*, "*Puritan-Platonic impeachment of poetry*". One such impeachment of poetry, and the most influential one, was that of **Stephen Gosson** (*The School of Abuse*), and in his *Defence* Sidney refutes one by one the charges against poetry brought by him. But before coming to the specific charges of puritans, like Stephen Gosson, Sidney replies to those critics who condemn poetry as mere versing and rhyming. Verse and rhyme do not make a poet. While verse and rhyme add to the delight of poetry, and have also many other advantages, they are not essential to poetry. There are many versifiers who are not poets, and many

"Imaginative Creations."

Sidney's defence is of all imaginative literature and not of poetry alone.

who have not used verse are poets in the real sense. Thus David's *Psalms* are poetry, though they are not written in poetry. The essence of poetry lies in feigning or "imaginative creation", and not in rhyme or metre. Thus Sidney's *Defence* is seen to be a defence of all imaginative literature, and not of poetry alone.

**Four Objections to Poetry : Sidney's Defence**

Gosson - Cornelius Agrippa -

Sidney then proceeds to answer the various objections that have been made against poetry. These objections, partly following *Gosson* and *Cornelius Agrippa*, and partly his own inclinations, he reduces to four. *In the first place*, it is objected that a man might spend his time more profitably than by reading the figments of poets. Poetry is a mere waste of time. But since teaching virtue is the real aim of all learning, and since poetry has been shown to accomplish this better than all other arts or sciences, this objection is easily answered. (The study of poetry is most profitable, for it imparts delightful instruction and so moves man to virtuous action.)

delightful instruction moves man to virtuous action.

*In the second place*, poetry has been called the mother of lies ; but Sidney shows that it is less likely to tell a lie than other sciences, for the poet does not assert the figments of his imagination as facts, and, since he affirms nothing, he cannot ever be said to lie. The poet never affirms and so he never lies for to lie is to affirm that to be true which is not true in reality. A Poet's truth are ideal and universal.

(affirms nothing.

*Thirdly*, poetry has been called. "the nurse of abuse," that is to say, poetry misuses and debases the mind of man by turning it to wantonness and by making it unmartial and effiminate.((But Sidney argues that it is man's wit what abuses poetry, and not poetry that abuses man's wit ; and as to making men effiminate, this charge applies to all other sciences more than to poetry, which in its description of battles and praises of valiant-men, stirs courage and enthusiasm. That is why in ancient times great warriors carried the works of poets with them.))

Alexander beheaded his Philosopher but carried Homer's to the war field.

*Lastly*, it is pointed out by the enemies of poetry that Plato, one of the greatest of philosophers, banished poets from his ideal commonwealth. But Plato's *Dialogues* are in reality themselves a form of poetry ; and it shows ingratitude in the most poetical of philosophers, that he should defile the fountain which was his source. "Yet—though Sidney perceives how fundamental are Plato's objections to poetry, he is inclined to believe that it was rather against the abuse of poetry by the contemporary Greek poets that Plato was chiefly cavailling ; for poets are praised by the *Ion*, and the greatest men of every age have been patrons and lovers of poetry"—(**Spingarn**). It should be remembered that in the *Ion* Plato has called poets "light and winged things", moved by divine frenzy.

which commonwealth - with which abused -

**Conclusion**

Sidney concludes : "Let it suffice that it is a fit soil for praise to dwell upon ; and what dispraise may set upon it, it is either easily

It doesnot abuse man's wit but that man's wit abuses Poetry.

overcome, or transformed into just commendation. So that, since the excellencies of it may be so easily and so justly confirmed, and the low-creeping objections so soon trodden down ; it not being an art of lies, but of true doctrine ; not of effiminateness, but of notable steering of courage ; not of abusing man's wit, but strengthening man's wit ; not banished but honoured by Plato.

### 4. Sidney's view of contemporary tragedy and tragi-comedy—His conception of tragedy

### Significance of Sidney's Remarks

Sidney's remarks on tragedy and comedy are equally illuminating and interesting. Says **Spingarn** in this connection, "Dramatic criticism in England began with Sir Philip Sidney. Casual references to the drama can be found in critical writings anterior to the *Defence of Poesy* ; but to Sideny belongs the credit of having first formulated, in a more or less systematic manner, the general principles of dramatic art." These principles, it need hardly be said, are those which, for half a century or more, had been undergoing discussion and modification in Italy and France, and of which the ultimate source was *the Poetics* of Aristotle. "Dramatic criticism in England was thus, from its very birth, both Aristotelian and classical, and it remained so for two centuries."

Dramatic Criticism in England began with Sir Philip Sidney =

### Sidney's Criticism of Contemporary Tragedy

The Senecan drama and the Aristotelian precepts were the sources of Sideny's theory of tragedy. The oratorial and sententious tragedies of Seneca had influenced dramatic theory and practice throughout Europe from the very outset of the Renaissance. Ascham, indeed, preferred Sophocles and Euripides to Seneca ; but he is an exception, and in direct opposition to the usual opinion of contemporary critics. Sidney, in his account of the English drama, could find but one tragedy modelled, as it should be, on the Senecan drama. The tragedy of *Gorbodus*, however, has one defect that provokes Sidney's censure,—it does not observe the unities of time and place. In all others respects, it is an ideal model for English playwrights to imitate. Its stately speeches and well-sounding phrases approach almost to the height of Seneca's style ; and in teaching most delightfully a notable morality, it attains the very end of poetry.

world is a weak foundation on which we build golden roofs.

### Condemnation of Tragi-Comedy

The ideal tragedy—and in this Sidney closely follows Aristotle and the Italians—is an imitation of a noble action, in the representation of which it stirs. "admiration and commiseration," and teaches the uncertainty of the world and the weak foundations upon which golden roofs are built. "It makes kings fear to be tyrant, and tyrants manifest their tyrannical humours." Sidney's censure of the contemporary tragedy is that it outrages the grave and weighty character of tragedy, its elevated style, and the dignity of the person-

mingling of kings
and clawons –
marches of hornpipe with funerals.

ages represented, by mingling kings and clowns, and introducing the most inappropriate buffoonery. Never did the ancients, like the English, "march hornpipes with funerals". The English dramas are neither true comedies nor true tragedies, and they disregard both the rules of poetry and honest civility. Tragedy is not tied to the laws of history, and may arrange and modify events as it please but it is certainly bound by the rules of poetry. It is evident, therefore, that the *Defence of Poesy*, as a French writer has observed, "gives us an almost complete theory of neo-classic tragedy, a hundred years before the *Art Poetique* of Boileau ; the severe separation of poetic forms, the sustained dignity of language, the unities, nothing is lacking."

**The Plot of Tragedy**

It should be noted that, according to Sideny, a tragedy should not begin with a tedious account of the ultimate origin of the story but it should begin with some principal or significant point which would bring the reader at once to the heart of things. Unimportant parts of the story, or parts which have happened before the significant point at which the story begins, may be narrated but not represented on the stage. In this way would result a coherent, and organic plot with a beginning, a middle and an end.

**Function of Tragedy** (admiration and Commiseration end of tragedy.

In all these respects, Sidney is very close to Aristotle, but he differs from the Greek critics and is closer to the critics of the Italian Renaissance when he says that the function of Tragedy is to cause *admiration and commiseration*, and not to bring about *the Katharsis* of the tragic emotions of pity and fear. Thus it is Sidney who is the first in England to lay down admiration and commiseration as the proper ends of tragedy, and in this respect, as in many other respects, he showed the way to the Pseudo-classic critics of the 17th and 18th centuries.

## 5. Sidney's Criticism of Contemporary Comedy

**Condemnation of Contemporary Comedy**

In his *Defence of Poetry*, Sidney is critical of contemporary poetry and drama, and denounces them for various faults and shortcomings. He finds the comedy of the day wicked and odious. Petty playwrights and actors have brought it into disrepute so that there is no English Comedy worth the name.

**Definition of Comedy**

Sidney's theory of comedy is based on the body of rules and observations which the Italian critics, aided by a few hints from Aristotle had deduced from the practice of the Greek dramatists. Sidney defines comedy, "*as an imitation of the common errors of life, which are represented in the most ridiculous and scornful manner, so*

Imitation of Common errors of life - Presented in scornful and ridiculous manner. So that the spectator is anxious to avoid such errors himself.

*that the spectator is anxious to avoid such errors himself.*" Comedy, therefore, shows the "filthiness of evil," but only in, "our private and domestical matters." It should aim at being wholly delightful, just as tragedy should be maintained by a well-raised admiration.

### Delight and Laughter : Distinction Between the Two

Delight is thus the first requirement of comedy, but the English comic writers err in thinking that delight cannot be obtained without laughter, whereas laughter is neither an essential effect of delight nor is necessary for it. Sidney thus distinguishes delight from laughter. The great fault of English comedy is that it stirs laughter concerning things that are sinful, *i.e.* wicked rather than merely ridiculous—forbidden plainly, according to Sidney, by Aristotle himself—and concerning things that are miserable, rather to be pitied than scorned.

### Subjects Proper to Comedy

delightful laughter mixed with delightful teaching.

Not only should comedy produce delightful laughter, but also it should mix with it that delightful teaching which is the end of all poetry. Human follies or errors, rather than human vice and wickedness, or the poverty of men, are the proper themes of comedy. Sidney's distinction between delight and laughter is psychological and the most original part of his treatise. It should also be noted that the aim of comedy is to expose and ridicule human folly such as affectation, hypocrisy, so that such follies may be corrected. *Thus he makes comedy a weapon of social reform.* Comedy is not merely to provide delight ; it must also correct and improve. As Vice cannot be corrected merely by being laughed at, it is excluded from the domain of comedy. Similarly, a poor man is not to be laughted at for he is not at fault for his poverty.

Vice wickedness Poverty are the common themes of a Comedy. Comedy a weapon of Social Reform

## 6. The Three Unities : Sidney's Views

### Contemporary Neglect of the Unities : Sidney's Condemnation.

In *A Defence of Poetry*, Sidney examines the state of contemporary drama, and finds it faulty both in time and place, which he points out, "are the two necessary companions of corporate action." The unities of time and place have not been observed even in *Gorboduc* the finest of English tragedies. In other plays, matters are still worse for the action ranges over Asia, Africa, and many other places. The same place, the stage, is made to serve as a garden, a cave, a battlefield, and as many other places. The violations of the Unity of Time are even more gross. Contemporary plays represent an action covering several generations, within the short span of two or three hours. Thus two lovers marry, have a child, who soon grows up, marries and has childern. All this is patently absurd, and the ancient, with few exceptions, did not err in this way. The moderns should also follow their example and observe the unities.

① Several places on the same stage:
② Several actions within a short span.

## Unities of Time and Place

It should be remembered that the unities of time and place were first formulated in Italy and France about the middle of the 15th century. The first mention of the unities in England is to be found, more than a dozen years later, in the *Defence of Poesy*, and it cannot be doubted that Sidney derived them directly from the Italian critic, Castlevetro.

The unities of Time and Place were certainly not formulated by Aristotle, though the Renaissance Critics ascribed these unities to him, and Sidney also errs in following them. As regards the Unity of Place, Aristotle does not even mention it. The Unity of Time is merely suggested when he says that, as far as possible, the action of a tragedy should not cover more than a single revolution of the sun. Aristotle has simply made a suggestion, he has not laid down any rigid rule. But Sidney, along with the Renaissance critics of Italy, favours a rigid application of the unities. It is in him that we find, for the first time in England, such advocacy of the three unities. Even Ben Jonson is less stringent than Sidney in this respect. It was only with the coming of the French influence in the 17th century that the unities began to be strictly followed. It should also be pointed out that the attitude both of Dryden and Johnson towards the unities is much more liberal. Indeed, it was **Dr. Johnson's** well-known defence of Shakespeare's violation of these unities which ended for ever their hold over the English drama.

## Unity of Action

It was only the Unity of Action which Aristotle had stressed and Sidney also is right in stressing it. If the Unity of Action is observed, the other two unities may very well be left to take care of themselves. This unity of action can be easily observed through the classical device of restrospective narration. The playwright should plunge into the middle of his story, and begin the action at some significant moment in the story. In this way attention would be concentrated on the essentials and the gain in intensity would be enormous. The earlier part of the story, though not represented on the stage, may be narrated by a messenger or some other suitable person, as was done by the classical dramatist. In this way, the plot would have a beginning, a middle and an end, and an action covering years would be staged within the short span of two or three hours.

## Unity of Atmosphere

Sidney also favours a strict observance of the unity of atmosphere, and for that reason strongly condemns tragi-comedy. In a comedy the action should be comic throughout, and similarly in a tragedy it should be serious. There should be no mingling of kings and clowns, of hornpipes and funerals. The mingling of the tragic and the comic, the serious and the gay, weakens the tragic effect so that the tragedy arouses, neither admiration nor commiseration. Sidney's *Apology* was written before the wonderful tragi-comedies of Shakespeare. Had he been familiar with the Shakespearean drama, he would have surely written in an entirely different vein. As Dryden pointed out at a later date, the observance of the unities have a cramping effect, and that is why the classical French drama lacks the breadth and catholicity of the Shakespearean drama.

## 7. The Classical and Romantic Elements

### Sidney's Classical Learning

A study of Sidney's *Defence of Poetry* clearly brings out Sidney's classicism. His classicism is seen in a host of references to classical literature, mythology, and criticism. The *Apology* is heavily weighed with Sidney's classical learning. He has great admiration for classical critics like Plato, Aristotle and Horace, and refers constantly to their authority. Every view which he expresses is justified with reference to these critics, or the Italian and French critics of the Renaissance such as Scaligar, Minterno and Castlevetro.

ancients should serve as models for the moderns —

### His Advocacy of Classical Rules

However, Sidney's classicism is best seen in his advocacy that the ancients should serve as models for the moderns, and that the classical rules of literary composition should be strictly followed by the English poets and dramatists. Like Plato, he has a high conception of the profession of a poets, and wants English poets to be *Makers* in the real sense of the word. They can rise to such heights by following worthy models, as the ancients are, by observing the rules devised by them. The three unities should be strictly followed, and tragedy and comedy must not be mixed up. He is critical of contemporary drama because it did not follow the rules of the ancients. In his repeated stress on 'teaching' as the aim and function of poetry he follows Plato, "whom, of all philosophers, I have ever esteemed most worthy of reverence". There is a passing reference, too, to his theory of Ideas and to his belief that the flesh hampers the soul in its progress to perfection. In his definition of poetry, he follows both Aristotle and Horace. 'Poesy', he says, 'is an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in his work *Mimesis*—with this end, to teach and delight'. In other matters his chief guide is Aristotle as interpreted by Castlevetro in his *the Poetics*, published in 1570.

### Advocacy of Classical Metres

Sidney is also a classicist in his advocacy of classical metres and in his praise of unrhymed classical verse. It should be remembered that he was a member of the *Areopagus*, whose chief aim was to introduce classical metres into English. That is why he says, that *verse*, *i.e. metre*, is 'but an ornament and no cause to poetry, sith there have been many most excellent poets that never versified, and now swarm many versifiers that need never answer to the name of poets... It is not rhyming and versing that maketh a poet, no more than a long gown maketh an advocate, who, though he pleaded in armour, should be an advocate and no soldier. Poetry, according to him, is the art of inventing new things, better than this world has to offer, and even prose that does so is poetry.

### The Romantic Element—Exuberant Imagination

But, a classical scholar though Sidney was, he was born an Englishman and on Elizabethan, and so could not easily get over his native love of rhyme or verse. It was for this reason that the ballad of *Chevy Chase*—'the old song of Percy and Douglas'—moved him powerfully whenever he heard it, although the classical scholar in him is ashamed to confess this 'barbarousness'. However, it should also be noted that he admits, that verse is superior to prose and defends rhyme for it increases the delight and sweetness of poetry, and is also an aid to memory. *Thus the classic in him mingles with the romanticism of the native English tradition. As* **Wimsatt and Brooks** put it, "*The sources of Sidney's 'Defence' were classical, but the spirit was not very sternly classical. Sidney sends up the joyous fireworks of the Italian Renaissance. His colours are enthusiastic, neo-Platonic, ideal purple and gold. The motion is soaring. He is essentially a theorist of the exuberant imagination.*"

### Imitation : Romantic Conception

As a matter of fact, Sidney's *Apology* is a happy amalgam of both the classic and romantic elements. His views on poetic imitation are highly romantic. Poetic imitation is not a mere photographic representation, but an act of creative imagination. The poet is creative in the true sense of the word. Sidney is the first English advocate of the romantic concept of imaginative creation. He allows the poet to create a world of his own 'within the Zodiac of his own wit'. In drama, he allows the invention of fresh incidents and situations. The dramatist may even change the chronological sequence of history according to the requirements of art. He is to be guided only by the laws of poetic truth and not by the laws of history.

### Romantic View of Inspiration

Sidney is also a romantic in his views on poetic inspiration. Poets are creative because of the 'divine fury' which prompts them to write. Poetry is "a divine gift", and "a divine breath", works in and through the poet. The poet is not the author of the poem he gives to the public. On the contrary, as Plato observed in his *Ion*, there is a divine fury flowing into the poet. This divine energy makes the poet "grow into another nature". Sidney states, "with the force of a divine breath, he bringeth things forth far surpassing

Divine inspiration of the poet makes us in company with the divine

her doings". Later on he remarks that Plato "attributeth unto poetry more than myself do, namely, to be the very inspiring of a divine force".

The poet is, as the Greeks called him, the Maker. But this Maker is fashioned in the image of another Maker. God "having made man to his own likeness set him...over all the works of that second Nature." Consequently, man is said to show his real nature in "the force of a divine breath". Poetry is a product of inspiration, and it is, therefore, truly divine. We are in touch with the divine when we are in the company of poetry. "When he is inspired, a transformation of his very being takes place and he makes a golden world in place of the brazen world of nature."

**Appreciation of Old English Masters**

Sidney's romanticism is also seen in his appreciation of Chaucer and the medieval ballad of *Chevy Chase*, considered rude and barbaric by the classics of the 17th and 18th centuries. He is of the view that Chaucer did excellently well in *Troilus and Crisyde*, in Surrey's *Lyrics* he finds many things, "tasting of a noble birth and worthy of a noble mind". He also finds much good poetry in Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*, though he does not appreciate his use of rustic language. He frankly confesses that his heart is 'moved' by the old song of Percy and Douglas, more than with a trumpet. As *David Daiches* points out, the classicists stressed the didactic element in poetry, but Sidney's stress is on the *moving* or transport of poetry. His ideas may be classical, but his spirit is romantic. He is double-faced, both classicist and romanticist.

① Rhyming and versing doesnot make a poet

② Long gown alone doesnot make an advocate:

③ Advocate in an armour doesnot make a soldier —

his ideas may be classical but his spirit is Romantic:

Sidney is the first English advocate of the Romantic concept of imaginative creation.

# 8

1. With the milk of poetry, highest knowledge was fed.
2. In all civilized nations poetry was used for the communication of ideas.

## Text

---

### AN APOLOGY FOR POETRY

Sidney's friends —

When the right virtuous Edwards Wotton and I were at the Emperor's Court together, we gave ourselves to learn horsemanship of John Pietro Pungliano, one that with great commendation had the place of an esquire in his stable. And he, according to the fertileness of the Italian wit, did not only afford us the demonstration of his practice, but sought to enrich our minds with the contemplations therein which he thought most precious. But with none I remember mine ears were at any time more laden, than when (either angered with slow payment, or moved with our learner-like admiration) he exercised his speech in the praise of his faculty. He said soldiers were the noblest estate of mankind, and horsemen the noblest of soldiers. He said they were the masters of war and ornaments of peace ; speedy goers and strong abiders ; triumphers both in camps and courts. Nay, to so unbelieved a point he proceeded, as that no earthly thing bred such wonder to a prince as to be a good horseman. Skill of government was but a *pedanteria* in comparison. Then would he add certain praises, by telling what a peerless beast a horse was, the only serviceable courtier without flattery, the beast of most beauty, faithfulness, courage, and such more, that if I had not been a piece of a logician before I came to him, I think he would have persuaded me to have wished myself a horse. But thus much at least with his no few words he drove into me, that self-love is better than any gilding to make that seem gorgeous wherein ourselves are parties.

Skill or Knowledge

Wherein, if Pugliano's strong affection and weak arguments will not satisfy you, I will give you a nearer example of myself, who (I know not by what mischance) in these my not old years and idlest times, having slipped into the title of a poet, am provoked to say something unto you in the defence of that my unelected vocation, which if I handle with more goodwill than good reasons, bear with me, since the scholar is to be pardoned that followeth the steps.

of his master. And yet I must say that, as I have just cause to make a pitiful defence of poor poetry, which from almost the highest estimation of learning is fallen to be the laughing-stock of children, so have I need to bring some more available proofs, since the former is by no mean barred of his deserved credit, the silly latter hath had even the names of philosophers used to the defacing of it, with great danger of civil war among the Muses.

And first, truly, to all them that, professing learning, inveigh against poetry, may justly be objected, that they go very near to ungratefulness, to seek to deface that which, in the noblest nations and languages that are known, hath been the first light-giver to ignorance, and first nurse, whose milk by little and little enabled them to feed afterwards of tougher knowledges. And will they now play the hedgehog that, being received into the den, drove out his host, or rather the vipers, that with their birth kill their parents? Let learned Greece in any of her manifold sciences be able to show me one book before Musaeus, Homer and Hesiod, all three nothing else but poets. Nay, let any history be brought that can say any writers were there before them, if there were not men of the same skill, as Orpheus, Linus (and some other are named, who having been the first of that country that made pens deliverers of their knowledge to their posterity, may justly challenge to be called their fathers in learning)) For not only in time they had this priority (although in itself antiquity be venerable) but went before them, as causes to draw with their charming sweetness the wild untamed wits to an admiration of knowledge. So as Amphion was said to move stones with his poetry to build Thebes, and Orpheus to be listened to by beasts, indeed stony and beastly people. So among the Romans were Livius Andronicus and Ennius. So in the Italian language the first that made it aspire to be a treasure-house of science were the poets Dante, Boccaccio and Petrarch. So in our English were Gower and Chaucer, after whom, encouraged and delighted with their excellent foregoing, others have followed to beautify our mother-tongue, as well in the same kind as in other arts.

Poets Earliest

This did so notably show itself, that the philosophers of Greece durst not a long time appear to the world but under the masks of poets. So Thales, Empedocles and Parmenides sang their natural philosophy in verses; so did Pythagoras and Phocylides their moral counsels; so did Tyrtaeus in war matters, and Solon in matters of policy; or rather they, being poets, did exercise their delightful vein in those points of highest knowledge, which before them lay hid to the world. For that wise Solon was directly a poet it is manifest, having written in verse the notable fable of the Atlantic Island, which was continued by Plato. And truly, even Plato, whosoever well considereth, shall find that in the body of his work, though the inside and strength were philosophy, the skin as it were and beauty depended most of poetry; for all standeth upon dialogues, wherein he feigneth many honest burgesses of Athens to speak of such matters, that, if they had been set on the rack, they would never

earlier writers were Poets!

To be troubled

x. Distractedly do I take up arms, but little purpose is there ~~is~~ in arms."

have confessed them ; besides his poetical describing the circumstances of their meetings, as the well-ordering of a banquet, the delicacy of a walk, with inter-lacing mere tales, as Gyges' Ring and others, which who knoweth not to be flowers of poetry did never walk into Apollo's garden.

(Histographers named their works after Poets)

Herodotus

And even historiographers (although their lips sound of things done, and verity be written in their foreheads) have been glad to borrow both fashion and, perchance, weight of the poets. So Herodotus entitled his history by the name of the nine Muses ; and both he and all the rest that followed him either stole or usurped of poetry their passionate describing of passions, the many particularities of battles, which no man could affirm, or, if that be denied me, long orations put in the mouths of great kings and captains, which it is certain they never pronounced. So that, truly, neither philosopher nor historiographer could at the first have entered into the gates of popular judgments, if they had not taken a great passport of poetry, which in all nations at this day, where learning flourisheth not, is plain to be seen, in all which they have some feeling of poetry.

Turkey & Ireland Poets held in great esteem.

In Turkey, besides their law-giving divines, they have no other writers but poets. In our neighbour country Ireland, where truly learning goeth very bare, yet are their poets held in a devout reverence. Even among the most barbarous and simple Indians, where no writing is, yet have they their poets, who make and sing songs, which they call *areytos*, both of their ancestors' deeds and praises of their gods,—a sufficient probability that, if ever learning come among them, it must be by having their hard dull wits softened and sharpened with the sweet delights of poetry. For until they find a pleasure in the exercises of the mind, great promises of much knowledge will little persuade them that know not the fruits of knowledge. In Wales, the true remnant of the ancient Britons, as there are good authorities to show the long time they had poets, which they called bards, so through all the conquests of Romans. Saxons, Danes, and Normans, some of whom did reek to ruin all memory of learning from among them, yet do their poets, even to this day, last ; so as it is not more notable in soon beginning, than in long continuing.

Wales called Poets Bards.

But since the authors of most of our sciences were the Romans, and before them the Greeks, let us a little stand upon their authorities, but even so far as to see what names they have given unto this now scorned skill. (Romans & Greeks)

Among the Romans a poet was called *vates*, which is as much as a diviner, foreseer or prophet, as by his conjoined words, *vaticinium* and *vaticinari*, is manifest : so heavenly a title did that excellent people bestow upon this heart-ravishing knowledge. And so far were they carried into the admiration thereof, that they thought in the chanceable hitting upon any such verses great foretokens of their following fortunes were placed. Whereupon

It was said that if anyone wanted to know his destiny he should open the book of virgil at random [illegible] virgil was regarded as oracle or prophet:

Oracle of virgil

grew the word of Sortes *Virgilianae*, when by sudden opening Virgil's book they lighted upon any verse of his making; whereof the histories of the emperors' lives are full; as of Albinus, the governor of our island, who in his childhood met with this verse.

*Arma amens capio nec sat rationis in armis,* (virgils' Aneid)

and in his age performed it: which, although it were a very vain and godless superstition, as also it was to think that spirits were commanded by such verses—whereupon this word charms, derived of *carmina*, cometh—so yet serveth it to show the great reverence those wits were held in, and altogether not without ground, since both the oracles of Delphos and Sibylla's prophecies were wholly delivered in verses. For that same exquisite observing of number and measure in words, and that high-flying liberty of conceit proper to the poet, did seem to have some divine force in it.

And may not I presume a little further, to show the reasonableness of this word *vates*, and say that the holy David's *Psalms* are a divine poem? If I do, I shall not do it without the testimony of great learned men, both ancient and modern. But even the name Psalms will speak for me; which, being interpreted, is nothing but Songs; then that, it is fully written in metre, as all learned Hebricians agree, although the rules be not yet fully found; lastly and principally, his handling his prophecy, which is merely poetical. For what else is the awaking his musical instruments, the often and free changing of persons, his notable *prosopopoeias*, when he maketh you, as it were, see God coming in His majesty, his telling of the beasts' joyfulness, and hills' leaping, but a heavenly poesy, wherein almost he showeth himself a passionate lover of that unspeakable and everlasting beauty to be seen by the eyes of the mind, only cleared by faith. But truely now having named him. I fear me I seem to profane that holy name, applying it to poetry, which is among us thrown down to so ridiculous on estimation. But they that with quiet judgements will look a little deeper into it, shall find the end and working of it such as, being rightly applied, deserveth not to be scourged out of the church of God.

Psalms of David a Poetic work—

Poiein (to make)—

Greeks

But now let us see how the Greeks named it and how they deemed of it. The Greeks called him a 'poet', which name hath, as the most excellent, gone through other languages. It cometh of this word *poiein*, which is 'to make': wherein, I know not whether by luck or wisdom, we Englishmen have met with the Greeks in calling him a maker: which name, how high and incomparable a title it is, I had rather were known by marking the scope of other sciences than by my partial allegation.

There is no art delivered to mankind that hath not the works of nature for his principal object, without which they could not consist, and on which they so depend as they become actors and players as it were, of what nature will have set forth. So both the astronomer look upon the stars, and, by that he seeth, set down what order nature hath taken therein. So do the geometrician and arithmeti-

"All sciences subject to nature"

cian in their divers sorts of quantities. So doth the musician in times tell you which by nature agree, which not. The natural philosopher thereon hath his name, and the moral philosopher standeth upon the natural virtues, vices and passions of man ; and 'follow nature' (saith he) 'therein, and thou shalt nor err'. The lawyer saith what men have determined ; the historian what men have done. The grammarian speaketh only of the rules of speech ; and the rhetorician and logician, considering what in nature will soonest prove and persuade, thereon give artificial rules, which still are compassed within the circle of a question, according to the proposed matter. The physician weigheth the nature of man's body, and the nature of things helpful or hurtful unto it. And the metaphysic, though it be in the second and abstract notions, and therefore be counted supernatural, yet doth he indeed build upon the depth of nature.

Only the poet, disdaining to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, doth grow in effect another nature, in making things either better than nature bringeth forth, or, quite anew, forms such as never were in nature, as the heroes, demigods, cyclops, chimeras, furies, and such like : so as he goeth hand in hand with Nature, not enclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely ranging only within the zodiac of his own wit. Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry as divers poets have done—neither with pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet-smelling flowers, nor whatsoever else may make the too-much-loved earth more lovely. Her world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden.

But let those things alone, and go to man—for whom as the other things are, so it seemeth in him her uttermost cunning is employed—and know whether she have brought forth so true a lover as Theagenes, so constant a friend as Pylades, so valiant a man as Orlando, so right a prince as Xenophon's Cyrus, so excellent a man every way as Virgil's Aeneas. Neither let this be jestingly conceived, because the works of the one be essential, the other in imitation or fiction ; for any understanding knoweth the skill of the artificer standeth in that *idea* or fore-conceit of the work, and not in the work itself. And that the poet hath that idea is manifest, by delivering them forth in such excellency as he hath imagined them. Which delivering forth also is not wholly imaginative, as we are wont to say by them that build castle in the air : but so for substantially it worketh, not only to make a Cyrus, which had been but a particular excellency, as nature might have done, but to bestow a Cyrus upon the world to make many Cyruses, if they will learn aright why and how that maker made him.

Neither let it be deemed too saucy a comparison to balance the highest point of man's wit with the efficiency of nature ; but rather give right honour to the heavenly Maker of the maker, who, having made man to His own likeness, set him beyond and over all the works of that second nature : which in nothing he showeth so

Poetry is an art of Imitation

much as in poetry, when, with the force of a divine breath, he bringeth things forth far surpassing her doings, with no small argument to the incredulous of that first accursed fall of Adam, since our erected wit maketh us know what perfection is, and yet our infected will keepeth us from reaching unto it. But these arguments will by few be understood, and by fewer granted. Thus much (I hope) will be given me, that the Greeks, with some probability of reason, gave him the name above all names of learning.

maker next to God.

Now let us go to a more ordinary opening of him, that the truth may be more palpable: and so I hope, though we get not so unmatched a praise as the etymology of his names will grant, yet his very description, which no man will deny, shall not justly be barred from a principal commendation.

Poetry therefore is an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in his word *Mimesis*, that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth—to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture—with this end, to teach and delight. (Kinds of Poetry)

Of this have been three several kinds. The chief, both in antiquity and excellency, were they that did imitate the inconceivable excellencies of God. Such were David in his *Psalms*; Solomon in his Song of Songs, in his Ecclesiastes, and Proverbs; Moses and Deborah in their Hymns; and the writer of Job; which, beside other, the learned Emanuel Tremellius and Franciscus Junius do entitle the poetical part of the Scripture. Against these none will speak that hath the Holy Ghost in due holy reverence. In this kind though in a full wrong divinity, were Orpheus, Amphion, Homer in his Hymns, and many other, both Greeks and Romans. And this poesy must be used by whosoever will follow St. James's counsel in singing psalms when they are merry; and I know is used with the fruit of comfort by some, when, in sorrowful pangs of their death-bringing sins, they find the consolation of the never-leaving goodness.

Divine Poetry.

The second kind is of them that deal with matters philosophical: either moral, as Tyrtaeus, Phocylides, and Cato; or natural, as Lucretius and Virgil's *Georgics*; or astronomical, as Manilius and Pontanus; or historical, as Lucan: which who mislike, the fault is in their judgement quite out of taste, and not in the sweet food of sweetly uttered knowledge.

(Philosophical Poetry)

But because this second sort is wrapped within the fold of the proposed subject, and takes not the free course of his own invention whether they properly be poets or no let grammarians dispute; and go to the third, indeed right poets, of whom chiefly this question ariseth; betwixt whom and these second is such a kind of difference as betwixt the meaner sort of painters, who counterfeit only such faces as are set before them, and more excellent, who having no law but wit, bestow that in colours upon you which is fittest for the eye to see; as the constant though lamenting look of Lucretia, when she punished in herself another's fault; wherein he painteth not

Poetry imitates to teach And delight.

Lucretia, whom he never saw, but painteth the outward beauty of such a virtue. For these third be they which most properly do imitate to teach and delight, and to imitate borrow nothing of what is, hath been or shall be; but range, only reined with learned discretion, into the divine consideration of what may be, and should be These be they that, as the first and most noble sort may justly be termed *vates*, so these are waited on in the excellentest languages and best understandings with the fore-described name of poets. For these indeed do merely make to imitate, and imitate both to delight and teach and delight to move men to take the goodness in hand which without delight they would fly as from a stranger; and teach to make them know that goodness whereunto they are moved: which being the noblest scope to which ever any learning was directed, yet want there not idle tongues to bark at them.

Sub-divisions of Poetry-

These be sub-divided into sundry more special denominations. The most notable be the heroic, lyric, tragic, comic, satiric, iambic, elegiac, pastoral, and certain others, some of these being termed according to the matter they deal with, some by the sorts of verses they liked best to write in; for indeed the greatest part of poets have apparelled their poetical inventions in that numerous kind of writing which is called verse—indeed but apparelled, verse being but an ornament and no cause to poetry, since there have been many most excellent poets that never versified, and now swarm many versifiers that need never answer to the name of poets. For Xenophon, who did imitate so excellently as to give us *effigiem just imperii*, the portraiture of a just empire, under the name of Cyrus (as Cicero saith of him), made therein an absolute heroical poem. So did Heliodorus in his sugared invention of that picture of love in Theagenes and Chariclea; and yet both these writ in prose: (which I speak to show that it is not rhyming and versing that maketh a poet—no more than a long gown maketh an advocate, who though he pleaded in armour should be and advocate and no soldier.) But it is that feigning notable images of virtues, vice, or what else, with that delightful teaching, which must be the right describing note to know a poet by: although indeed the senate of Poets hath chosen verse as their fittest raiment, meaning, as in matter they passed all in all, so in manner to go beyond them; not speaking (table-talk fashion or like men in a dream) words as they chanceably fall from the mouth, but peizing each syllable of each word by just proportion, according to the dignity of the subject.

S. Imp. !!

Now therefore it shall not be amiss first to weigh this latter sort of poetry by his works, and then by his parts; and if in neither of these anatomies he be condemnable, I hope we shall obtain a more favourable sentence. This purifying of wit, this enriching of memory, enabling of judgement, and enlarging of conceit, which commonly we call learning, under what name soever it come forth or to what immediate end soever it be directed, the final end is to lead and draw us to as high a perfection as our degenerate souls, made worse by their clayey lodgings, can be capable of. This, according to the inclination of man, bred many-formed impressions. For some that thought this felicity principally to be gotten by knowledge, and no knowledge to be so high and heavenly as acquaintance with the stars, gave themselves to Astronomy ; others, persuading themselves to be demigods if they knew the causes of things, became natural and supernatural philosophers ; some an admirable delight drew to Music ; and some the certainty of demonstration to the Mathematics. But all, one and other, having this scope—to know, and by knowledge to lift up the mind from the dungeon of the body to the enjoying his own divine essence. But when by the balance of experience it was found that the astronomer looking to the stars might fall into a ditch, that the inquiring philosopher might be blind in himself, and the mathematician might draw forth a straight line with a crooked heart, then, to, did proof, the over-ruler of opinions, make manifest that all these are but serving sciences, which, as they have each a private end in themselves, so yet are they all directed to the highest end of the mistress-knowledge by the Greeks called *Architectonike*, which stands (as I think) in the knowledge of a man's self, in the ethic and politic consideration, with the end of well-doing and not of well-knowing only ; even as the saddler's next end is to make a good saddle, but his further end to serve a nobler faculty, which is horsemanship ; so the horseman's to soldiery, and the soldier not only to have the skill, but to perform the practice of a soldier. So that, the ending end of all earthly learning being virtuous action, those skills, that most serve to bring forth that, have a most just title to be princes over all the rest ; wherein we can show the poets nobleness by setting him before his other competitors.

Among whom as principal challengers step forth the moral philosophers ; whom, me thinketh, I see coming towards me with a sullen gravity, as though they could not abide vice by daylight, rudely clothed for to witness outwardly their contempt of outward things, with books in their hands against glory, whereto they set their names, sophistically speaking against subtlety, and angry with any man in whom they see the foul fault of anger. These men, casting largess as they go, of definitions, divisions and distinctions, with a scornful interrogative do soberly ask whether it be possible to find any path so ready to lead a man to virtue, as that which teacheth what virtue is, and teacheth it not only by delivering forth his very being, his causes, and effects, but also by making known his enemy vice (which must be destroyed), and his cumbersome servant, passion (which must be mastered), by showing the generalities that containeth it, and the specialities that are derived from it ; lastly, by plain setting down, how it extendeth itself out of the limits of a man's own little world, to the government of families, and maintaining of public societies.

(History).

The historian scarcely giveth leisure to the moralist to say so much, but that he, laden with old mouse-eaten records authorizing himself (for the most part) upon other histories, whose greatest authorities are built upon the notable foundation of hearsay; having

×. Quotations from Cicero's 'De-oratore' "History is the evidence of time, the light of truth, the life of memory, the direct[illegible] of life, the [illegible] antiquity."

× where Persians defeated Athenians in 490 BC

much ado to accord differing writers and to pick truth out of partiality; better acquainted with a thousand years ago than with the present age, and yet better knowing how this world goeth than how his own wit runneth; curious for antiquities and inquisitive of novelties; a wonder to young folks and a tyrant in table-talk; denieth, in a great chafe, that any man for teaching of virtue, and virtuous actions, is comparable to him.× 'I am *testis temporum, lux veritatis, vita memoriae, magistra vitae, nuntia vetustatis*. The philosopher', saith he, 'teacheth a disputative virtue, but I do an active. His virtue is excellent in the dangerless Academy of Plato, but mine showeth forth her honourable face in the battles of Marathon,× Pharsalia,✓ Poitiers, and Agincourt. He teacheth virtue by certain abstract considerations, but I only bid you follow the footing of them that have gone before you. Old-aged experience goeth beyond the fine-witted philosopher, but I give the experience of many ages. Lastly, if he make the song-book, I put the learner's hand to the lute; and if he be the guide, I am the light.' Then would he allege you innumerable examples, conferring story by story, how much the wisest senators and princes have been directed by the credit of history, as Brutus, Alphonsus of Aragon, and who not, if need be? At length the long line of their disputation maketh a point in this, that the one giveth the precept, and the other the example.

City of Greece where Caesar defeated Pompey.
✓ A city in France
✓ A village in France.
A well known Philosopher-

Now, whom shall we find (since the question standeth for the highest form in the school of learning) to be moderator? Truly, as me seemeth, the poet; and if not a moderator, even the man that ought to carry the title from them both, and much more from all other serving sciences. Therefore compare we the poet with the historian, and with the moral philosopher; and if he go beyond them both, no other human skill can match him. For, as for the divine, with all reverence it is ever to be excepted, not only for having his scope as far beyond any of these as eternity exceedeth a moment, but even for passing each of these in themselves. And for the lawyer, though *Jus* be the daughter of Justice, and Justice the chief of virtues, yet because he seeketh to make men good rather *formidine poenae* than *virtutis amore*; or, to say righter, doth not endeavour to make men good, but that their evil hurt not others; having no care, so he be a good citizen, how bad a man he be; therefore, as our wickedness maketh him necessary and necessity maketh him honourable, so is he not in the deepest truth to stand in rank with these who all endeavour to take naughtiness away, and plant goodness even in the secretest cabinet of our souls. And these four are all that any deal in that consideration of men's manners, which being the supreme knowledge, they that best breed it deserve the best commendation.

Law
For fear of punishment
& love of virtue.

The philosopher, therefore, and the historian are they which would win the goal, the one by precept, the other by example. But both, not having both, do both halt. For the philosopher, setting down with thorny argument the bare rule, is so hard of utterance, and so misty to be conceived, that one that halth no other guide but him shall wade in him till he be old, before he shall find sufficient cause to be honest. For his knowledge standeth so upon the abstract and general, that happy is that man who may understand him, and more happy that can apply what he doth understand. On the other side, the historian, wanting the precept, is so tied, not to what should be but to what is, to the particular truth of things and not to the general reason of things, that his example draweth no necessary consequence, and therefore a less fruitful doctrine.

Now doth the peerless poet perform both ; for whatsoever the philosopher saith should be done, he giveth a perfect picture of it in some one by whom he presupposeth it was done, so as he coupleth the general notion with the particular example. A perfect picture I say, for he yieldeth to the powers of the mind an image of that whereof the philosopher bestoweth but a wordish description ; which doth neither strike, pierce, nor possess the sight of the soul so much as that other doth. For as in outward things, to a man that had never seen an elephant or a rhinoceros, who should tell him most exquisitely all their shapes, colour, bigness, and particular marks ; or of a gorgeous palace, the architecture, with declaring the full beauties, might well make the hearer able to repeat, as it were by rote, all he had heard, yet should never satisfy his inward conceits with being witness to itself of a true lively knowledge ; but the same man, as soon as he might see those beasts well painted, or the house well in model, should straightways grow, without need of any description, to a judicial comprehending of them : so no doubt the philosopher, with his learned definitions—be it of virtue, vices, matters of public policy or private government—replenisheth the memory with many infallible grounds of wisdom, which notwithstanding, lie dark before the imaginative and judging power, if they be not illuminated or figured forth by the speaking picture of poesy.

father of Aneas - well known hero of Trojan war —

Tully taketh much pains, and many times not without poetical helps, to make us know the focre love of our country hath in us. Let us but hear old Anchises speaking in the midst of Troy's flames, or see Ulysses, in the fullness of all Calypo's delights, bewail his absence from barren and beggarly Ithaca. Anger, the Stoics said, was a short madness : let but Sophocles bring you Ajax on a stage, killing or whipping sheep and oxen, thinking them the army of Greeks, with their chieftains Agamemnon and Menelaus, and tell me if you have not a more familiar insight into anger, than finding in the schoolmen his genus and difference. See whether wisdom and temperance in Ulysses and Diomedes, valour in Achilles, friendship in Nisus and Euryalus, even to an ignorant man carry not and apparent shining. And, contrarily, the remorse of conscience in Oedipus, the soon repenting pride of Agamemnon, the self-devouring cruelty in father Atreus, the violence of ambition in the two Theban brothers, the sour sweetness of revenge in Medea, and, to fall lower, the Terentian Gnatho and our Chaucer's Pandar so expressed that we now use their names to signify their trades ; and finally, all virtues, vices, and passions so in their own natural states laid to the view, that we seem not to hear of them, but clearly to see through them.

But even in the most excellent determination of goodness, what philosopher's counsel can so readily direct a prince, as the feigned Cyrus in Xenophon ? Or a virtuous man in all fortunes, as Aeneas in Virgil ? Or a whole commonwealth, as the way of Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* ? I say the way, because where Sir Thomas More erred it was the fault of the man and not of the poet ; for that way of patterning a commonwealth was most absolute, though he, perchance, halth not so absolutely performed it. For the question is, whether the feigned image of poesy or the regular instruction of philosophy, hath the more force in teaching : wherein if the philosophers have more rightly showed themselves philosophers than the poets have attained to the high top of their profession, as in truth. In Ars Poetica, Horace writes "Neither men nor gods nor booksellers condone the mediocrity of Poets:"

*Mediocribus esse poetis,*
*Non Dii, non homines, non concessere columnae* ;

it is, I say again, not the fault of the art, but that by few men that art can be accomplished.

Certainly, even our Saviour Christ could as well have given, the moral commonplaces of uncharitableness and humbleness as the divine narration of Dives and Lazarus ; or of disobedience and mercy, as that heavenly discourse of the lost child and the gracious father ; but that His through-searching wisdom knew the estate of Dives burning in hell, and of Lazarus being in Abraham's bosom, would more constantly (as it were) inhabit both the memory and judgement. Truly, for myself, meseems I see before mine eyes the lost child's disdainful prodigality, turned to envy a swine's dinner : which by the learned divines are thought not historical acts, but instructing parables.

Gluttons
considered to
be reward of
virtuous-

For conclusion I say the philosopher teacheth, but he teacheth obscurely, so as the learned only can understand him ; that is to say, he teacheth them that are already taught. But the poet is the food for the tenderest stomachs ; the poet is indeed the right popular philosopher, whereof Aesop's tales give good proof ; whose pretty allegories, stealing under the formal tales of beasts, make many, more beastly than beasts, being to hear the sound of virtue from these dumb speakers.

But now may it be alleged that if this imagining of matters be so fit for the imagination, then must the historian needs surpass, who bringeth you images of true matters, such as indeed were done, and not such as fantastically or falsely may be suggested to have been done. Truly, Aristotle himself, in his discourse of Poesy, plainly determineth this question, saying the poetry is *Philosophoteron* and *spoudaioteron*, that is to say, it is more philosophical and more studiously serious than history. His reason is because poesy dealeth with *katholou*, that is to say with the universal consideration, and the history with *kathekaston*, the particular: 'now', saith he, 'the universal weighs what is fit to be said or done, either in likelihood or necessity (which the poesy considereth in his imposed names), and the particular only marks whether Alcibiades did, or suffered, this or that.' Thus for Aristotle : which reason of his (as all his) is most full of reason. For indeed, if the question were whether it were better to have a particular act truly or falsely set down, there is no doubt which is to be chosen, no more than whether you had rather have Vespasian's picture right as he was, or, at the painter's pleasure, nothing resembling. But if the question be for your own use and learning, whether it be better to have it set down as it should be or as it was, then certainly is more doctrinable the feigned Cyrus of Xenophon than the true Cyrus in Justin ; and the feigned Aeneas in Virgil than the right Aeneas in Dares Phrygius ; as to a lady that desired to fashion her countenance to the best grace, a painter should more benefit her to portrait a most sweet face, writing Canidia upon it, than to paint Canidia as she was, who, Horace sweareth, was foul and ill-favoured.

If the poet do his part aright, he will show you in Tantalus Atreus, and such like, nothing that is not to be shunned ; in Cyrus Aeneas, Ulysses, each thing to be followed ; where the historian, bound to tell things as things were, cannot be liberal (without he will be poetical) of a perfect pattern, but as in Alexander or Scipio himself, show doings, some to be liked, some to be misliked. And then how will you discern what to follow but by your own discretion, which you had without reading Quintas Curtius ? And whereas a man may say, though in universal consideration of doctrine the poet prevaileth, yet that the history, in his saying such a thing was done, doth warrant a man more in that he shall follow, the answer is manifest : that if he stand upon that *was*—as if he should argue, because it rained yesterday, therefore it should rain today—then indeed it hath some advantage to a gross conceit ; but if he known an example only informs a conjectured likelihood, and so go by reason, the poet doth so far exceed him, as he is to frame his example to that which is most reasonable, be it in warlike, politic or private matters ; where the historian in his bare *was* hath many times that which we call fortune to overrule the best wisdom. Many times he must tell events whereof he can yield no cause : or, if he do, it must be poetically.

For that a feigned example hath as much force to teach as a true example (for as for to move, it is clear, since the feigned may be tuned to the highest key of passion), let us take one example wherein a poet and a historian do concur. Herodotus and Justin do both testify that Zopyrus, King Darius's faithful servant, seeing his master long resisted by the rebellious Babylonians, feigned himself in extreme disgrace of his king ; for verifying of which, he caused his own nose and ears to be cut off, and so flying to the Babylonians, was received, and for his known valour so far credited, that he did find means to deliver them over to Darius. Much like matter doth Livy record of Tarquinius and his son. Xenophon excellently feigneth such another stratagem performed by Abradarat in Cyrus's behalf. Now would I fain know, if occasion be presented unto you to serve your prince by such an honest dissimulation, why you do not as well learn it of Xenophon's fiction as of the other's verity: and truly so much the better, as you shall save your nose by the bargain; for Abradatas did not counterfeit so far. So then the best of the historian is subject to the poet; for whatsoever action, or faction, whatsoever counsel, policy, or war stratagem the historian is bound to recite, that may the poet (if he list) with his imitation make his own, beautifying it both for further teaching, and more delighting, as it pleaseth him, having all, from Dante's heaven to his hell, under the authority of his pen. Which if I be asked what poets have done so, as I might well name some, yet say I, and say again, I speak of the art, and not of the artificer.

Now, to that which commonly is attributed to the praise of histories, in respect of the notable learning is gotten by marking the success, as though therein a man should see virtue exalted and vice punished—truly that commendation is peculiar to poetry, and far off from history. For indeed Poetry ever setteth virtue so out in her best colours, making Fortune her well-waiting handmaid, that one must needs be enamoured of her. Well may you see Ulysses in a storm, and in other hard plights; but they are but exercisesof patience and magnanimity, to make them shine the more in the near-following prosperity. And of the contrary part, if evil men come to the stage, they ever go out (as the tragedy writer answered to one that misliked the show of such persons) so manacled as they little animate folks to follow them. But the historian, being capived to the truth of a foolish world, is many times a terror from well-doing, and an encouragement to unbridled wickedness. For see we not valiant Miltiades rot in his fetter? The just Phocion and the accomplished Socrates put to death like traitors? The cruel Severus like prosperously? The excellent Severus miserable murdered? Sylla and Marius dying in their beds? Pompey and Cicero slain then, when they would have thought exile a happiness? See we not virtuous Cato driven to kill himself, and rebel Caesar so advanced that his name yet, after sixteen hundred years, lasteth in the highest honour? And mark but even Caesar's own word's of the forenamed Sylla (who in that only did honestly, to put down his dishonest tyranny), *literas nescivit*: as if want of learning caused him to do well. He meant it not by poetry, which, not content with earthly plagues, deviseth new punishments in hell for tyrants, nor yet by philosophy, which teacheth *occidendos esse*; but no doubt by skill in history, for that indeed can afford your Cypselus, Periander, Phalaris, Dionysius, and I know not how many more of the same kennel that speed well enough in their abominable injustice or usurpation.

I conclude, therefore, that he excelleth history, not only in furnishing the mind with knowledge, but in setting it forward to that which deserveth to be called and accounted good ; which setting forward, and moving to well doing, indeed setteth the laurel crown upon the poet as victorious, not only of the historian, but over the philosopher, however in teaching it may be questionable.

For suppose it be granted (that which I suppose with great reason may be denied) that the philosopher, in respect of his methodical proceeding, doth teach more perfectly than the poet, yet do I think that no man is so much *Philophilosophos* as to compare the philosopher, in moving, with the poet.

And that moving is of a higher degree than teaching, it may by this appear, that it is well night the cause and the effect of teaching. For who will be taught, if he be not moved with desire to be taught ? And what so much good doth that teaching bring forth (I speak till of moral doctrine) as that it moveth one to do that which it doth teach ? For, as Aristotle saith, it is not *gnosis* but *praxis* must be the fruit. And how *praxis* can be, without being moved to practise, it is no hard matter to consider.

knowledge-
actions

The philosopher showeth you the way, he informeth you of the particularities, as well of the tediousness of the way, as of the pleasant lodging you shall have when your journey is ended, as of the many by-turnings that may divert you from your way ; but this is to no man but to him that will read him, and read him with attentive, studious painfulness ; which constant desire whosoever hath in him, hath already passed half the hardness of the way, and therefore is beholding to the philosopher but for the other half. Nay, truly, learned men have learnedly thought that where once reason hath so much overmastered passion as that the mind hath a free desire to do well, the inward light each mind hath in itself is as good as a philosopher's book, since in nature we know it is well to do well, and what is well and what is evil, although not in the words of art which philosophers bestow upon us ; for out of natural conceit the philosophers drew it. But to be moved to do that which we know, or to be moved with desire to know, *hac opus, hic labar est.*

This is toil, this is labour-

Now therein of all sciences (I speak still of human, and according to the human conceit) is our poet the monarch. For he doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way, as will entice any man to enter into it. Nay, he doth, as if your journey should lie through a fair vineyard, at the first give you a cluster of grapes, that, full of that taste, you may long to pass further. He beginneth not with obscure definitions, which must blur the margin with interpretations, and load the memory with doubtfulness ; but he cometh to you with words set in delightful proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for, the well enchanting skill of music ; and with a tale, forsooth, he cometh, unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney-corner. And, prentending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue ; even as the child is often brought to take most wholesome things by hiding them in such other as have a pleasant taste : which, if one should begin to tell them the nature of aloes or rhubarb they should receive, would sooner take their physic at their ears than at their mouth. So is it in men (most of which are childish in the best things till they be cradled in their graves) : glad they will be to hear the tales of Hercules, Achilles, Cyrus, and Aeneas ; and, hearing them, must needs hear the right description of wisdom, valour, and justice ; which, if they had been barely, that is to say philosophically, set out, they would swear they be brought to school again.

That imitation whereof poetry is, hath the most conveniency to nature of all other ; insomuch that, as Aristotle saith, those things which in themselves are horrible, as cruel battles, unnatural monsters, are made in poetical imitation delightful. Truly, I have known men, that even with reading *Amadis de Gaule* (which God knoweth wanteth much of a perfect poesy) have found their hearts moved to the exercise of courtesy, liberality, and especially courage. Who readeth Aeneas carrying old Anchises on his back, that wisheth not it were his fortune to perform so excellent an act ? Whom do not the words of Turnus move, the tale of Turnus having planted his image in the imagination ?

Shall this land see (Turnus) a fugitive

*Fugientem haec terra videbit* ?

*Usque adeone mori miserum est* ?

Is it, afterall so pitiful a thing to die.

Where the philosophers, as they scorn to delight, so much they be content little to move, saving wrangling whether virtue be the chief or the only good, whether the contemplative or the active life do excel : which Plato and Boethius well knew, and therefore made Mistress Philosophy very often borrow the masking raiment of Poesy. For even those hard-hearted evil men who think virtue a school-name, and know no other good but *indulgere genio*, and therefore despise the austere admonitions of the philosopher, and feel not the inward reason they stand upon, yet will be content to be delighted—which is all the good-fellow poet seemeth to promise—and so steal to see the form of goodness (which seen, they cannot but love) ere themselves be aware, as if they took a medicine of cherries.

follow own inclinations

Infinite proofs of the strange effects of this poetical invention might be alleged ; only two shall serve, which are so often remembered as I think all men know them. The one of Menenius Agrippa, who, when the whole people of Rome had resolutely divided themselves from the senate, with apparent show of utter ruin, though he were (for that time) an excellent orator, came not among them upon trust either of figurative speeches or cunning insinuations and much less with far-fetched maxims of philosophy, which (especially if they were Platonic) they must have learned geometry before they could well have conceived ; but, forsooth, he behaves himself like a homely and familiar poet. He telleth them a tale, that there was a time when all the parts of the body made a mutinous conspiracy against the belly, which they thought devoured the fruits of each other's labour; the concluded they would let so unprofitable a spender starve. In the end, to be short (for the tale is notorious, and as notorious that it was a tale), with punishing the belly they plagued themselves. This applied by him, wrought such effect in the people, as I never read that ever words brought forth but then so sudden and so good an alteration; for upon reasonable conditions a perfect reconcilement ensued. The other is of Nathan the Prophet, who, when the holy David had so far forsaken God as to confirm adultery with murder, when he was to do the tenderest office of a friend, in laying his own shame before his eyes, sent by God to call again so chosen a servant, how doth he it but by telling of a man whose beloved lamb was ungratefully taken from his bosom? The application most divinely true, but the discourse itself feigned; which made David (I speak of the second and instrumental cause) as in a glass to see his own filthiness, as that heavenly Psalm of Mercy well testifieth.

By these, therefore, examples and reasons, I think it may be manifest that the poet, with that same hand of delight, doth draw the mind more effectually than any other art doth: and so a conclusion not unfitly ensueth, that as virtue is the most excellent resting-place for all worldly learning to make his end of, so poetry, being the most familiar to teach it, and most princely to move towards it, in the most excellent work is the most excellent workman.

Tragi-Comical –

But I am content not only to decipher him by his works (although works in commendation or dispraise must ever hold a high authority), but more narrowly will examine his parts; so that, as in a man, though all together may carry a presence full of majesty and beauty, prechance in some one defectuous piece we may find a blemish. Now in his parts, kinds, or species (as you list to term them), it is to be noted that some poesies, have coupled together two or three kinds, as tragical and comical, whereupon is risen the tragi-comical. Some, in the like manner, have mingled prose and verse, as Sannazzaro and Boethius. Some have mingled matters heroical and pastoral. But that cometh all to one in this question, for, if severed they be good, the conjunction cannot be hurtful. Therefore, perchance forgetting some, and leaving some as needless to be remembered, it shall not be amiss in a word to cite the special kinds, to see what faults may be found in the right use of them.

Poesies
Coupled
together
two or
three kinds

Is it then the Pastrol poem which is misliked? (For perchance where the hedge is lowest, they will soonest leap over.) Is the poor pipe disdained, which sometimes out of Meliboeus' mouth can show the misery of people under hard lords or ravening soldiers, and again, by Tityrus, what blessedness is derived to them that lie

Sidney refers to war between Persia & Greece in which Greece won the cock - master of.

lowest from the goodness of them that sit highest ? Sometimes, under the pretty tales of wolves and sheep, can include the whole considerations of wrong-doing and patience ; sometimes show that contention for trifles can get but a trifling victory ; where perchance a man may see that even Alexander and Darius, when they strave who should be cock of this world's dunghill, the benefit they got was that the after-livers may say :

These things I remember that Thyrsis strove in vain & was vanquished

*Haec memini et victum frustra contendere Thyrsim* :
*Ex illo Corydon, Corydon est tempore nobis.*

Henceforth Corydon is the only poet for us

Or is it the lamenting Elegiac, which in a kind heart would move rather pity than blame ; who bewails with the great philosopher Heraclitus the weakness of mankind and the wretchedness of the world ; who surely is to be praised, either for compassionate accompanying just causes of lamentation, or for rightly painting out how weak be the passions of woefulness ?

Is it the bitter but wholesome Iambic, which rubs the galled mind, in making shame trumpet of villainy, with bold and open crying out against naughtiness ?

Or the Sartiric who, While his friend laughs, sly (Quintus Horatius) Flacus touches up his every fault & once

*Omne vafer vitium ridenti tangit amico* :

admitted can play with his every vital — Persius says about Horace

who sportingly never leaveth until he make a man laugh at folly, and, at length ashamed to laugh at himself, which he cannot avoid without avoiding the folly ; who, while,

*circum praecordia ludit*,

giveth us to feel how many headaches a passionate life bringeth us to ; how, when all is done,

*Est Ulubris, animus si nos non deficit aequus* ?

No, perchance it is the Comic, whom naughty play-makers and stage-keepers have justly made odious. To the argument of abuse I will answer after. Only thus much now is to be said, that the comedy is an imitation of the common errors of our life, which he representeth in the most ridiculous and scornful sort that may be, so as it is impossible that any beholder can be content to be such a one. Now, as in geometry the oblique must be known as well as the right, and in arithmetic the odd as well as the even, so in the actions of our life who seeth not the filthiness of evil wanteth a great foil to perceive the beauty of virtue. This doth the comedy handle so in our private and domestical matters, as with hearing it we get, as it were, an experience what is to be looked for of a niggardly Demea, of a carfty Davus, of a flattering Gnatho, of a vainglorious Thraso ; and not only to know what effects are to be expected, but to know who be such, by the signifying badge give them by the comedian. And little reason hath any man to say that men learn evil byseeing it so set out ; since, as I said before, there is no man living but, by the force truth hath in nature, no sooner seeth these men play their parts, but wisheth them *in pristrinum* ; although perchance the sack of his own faults lie so behind his back, that he seeth not himself to dance the same measure ; whereto yet nothing can more open his eyes than to find his own actions contemptibly set forth.

So that the right use of comedy will (I think) by nobody be blamed, and much less of the high and excellent Tragedy, that openeth the greatest wounds, and showeth forth the ulcers that are covered with tissue ; that maketh kings fear to be tyrants, and tyrants manifest their tyranncial humours ; that, with stirring the effects of admiration and commiseration, teacheth the uncertainty of this world, and upon how weak foundations gilden roofs are builded ; that maketh us know :

*Qui sceptra saevus duro imperio regit,*
*Timet timentes, metus in auctorem redit.*

But how much it can move, Plutarch yieldeth a notable testimony of the abominable tyrant Alexander Pheraeus ; from whose eyes a tragedy, well made and represented, drew abundance of tears, who, without all pity, had murdered infinite number, and some of his own blood ; so as he that was not ashamed to make matters for tragedies, yet could not resist the sweet violence of a traged. And if it wrought no further good in him, it was that he, in despite of himself, withdrew himself from hearkening to that which might mollify his hardened heart. But it is not the tragedy they do mislike ; for it were too absurd to cast out so excellent a representation of whatsoever is most worthy to be learned.

Is it the Lyric that most displeaseth, who with his tuned lyre, and well-accorded voice, giveth praise, the reward of virtue, to virtuous acts ; who giveth moral precepts and natural problems ; who sometimes raiseth up his voice to the height of the heavens, in singing the lauds of the immortal God ? Certainly I must confess my own barbarousness : I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet; and yet is it sung but by some blind crowder, with no rougher voice than rude style ; which being so evil apparelled in the dust and cobwebs of that uncivil age, what would it work, trimmed in the gorgeous eloquence of Pindar ? In Hungary I have seen it the manner at all feasts, and other such meetings, to have sons of their ancestors' valour ; which that right soldier-like nation think the chiefest kindlers of brave courage. The incomparable Lacedemonians did not only carry that kind of music ever with them to the field, but even at home, as such songs were made, so were they all content to be the singers of them ; when the lusty men were to tell that they did, the old men what they had done, and the young men what they would do. And where a man may say that Pindar many times praiseth highly victories of small moment, matters rather of sport than virtue; as it may be answered, it was the fault of the poet, and not of the poetry, so indeed the chief fault was in the time and custom of the Greeks, who set those toys at so high a price that Philip of Macedon reckoned a horse-race won at Olympus among his three fearful felicities. But as the inimitable Pindar often did, so is that kind most capable and most fit to awake the thoughts from the sleep of idleness, to embrace honourable enterprises.

There rests the Heroical, whose very name (I think) should daunt all backbiters; for by what conceit can a tongue be directed to speak evil of that which draweth with it no less champions than Achilles, Cyrus, Aeneas, Turnus, Tydeus, and Rinaldo?—who doth not only teach and move to truth, but teacheth and moveth to the most high and excellent truth; who maketh magnanimity and justice shine through all misty fearfulness and foggy desires; who, if the saying of Plato and Tully be true, that who could see virtue would be wonderfully ravished with the love of her beauty—this man sets her out to make her more lovely in her holiday apparel, to the eye of any that will design not to disdain until they understand. But if anything be already said in the defence of sweet poetry, all concurreth to the maintaining the heoical which is not only a kind, but the best and most accomplished kind of poetry. For as the image of each action stirreth and instructeth the mind, so the lofty image of such worthies most inflameth the mind with desire to be worth, and informs with counsel how to be worthy. Only let Aeneas be worn in the tablet of your memory, how he governeth himself in the ruin of his country; in the preserving his old father, and carrying away his religious ceremonies; in the obeying the god's commandment to leave Dido, though not only all passionate kindness, but even the human consideration of virtuous greatfulness, would have craved other of him: how in storms, how in sports, how in war, how in peace, how a fugitive, how victorious, how besieged, how besieging, how to strangers, how to allies, how to enemies, how to his own; lastly, how in his inward self, and how in his outward government; and I think, in a mind not prejudiced with a prejudicating humour, he will be found in excellency fruitful, yea, even as Horace saith,

*Melius Chrysippo et Crantore*. Better than Chrysippo es Crantore.

But truly I imagine it falleth out with these poet-whippers, as with some good women, who often are sick but in faith they cannot tell where; so the name of poetry is odious to them, but neither his cause nor effects, neither the sum that contains him nor the particularities descending from him, give any fast handle to their carping dispraise.

Since then poetry is of all human learning the most ancient and of most fatherly antiquity, as from whence other learnings have taken their beginnings; since it is so universal that no learned nation doth despise it, nor no barbarous nation is without it; since both Roman and Greek gave divine names unto it, the one of prophesying the other of making, and that indeed that name of making is fit for

(Poet is the maker)

him, considering that whereas other arts retain themselves within their subject and receive, as it were, their being from it, the poet only bringeth his own stuff, and doth not learn a conceit out of a matter, but matter for a conceit; since neither his description nor his end containeth any evil, the thing described cannot be evil; since his effects be so good as to teach goodness and to delight the learners; since therein (namely in normal doctrine, the chief of all knowledges) he doth not only far pass the historian, but, for instructing, is well high comparable to the philosopher, and for moving, leaves him behind him; since the Holy Scripture (wherein there is no uncleanness) hath whole parts in it poetical, and that even our Saviour Christ vouchsafed to use the flowers of it; since all his kinds are not only in their united forms, but in their severed dissections fully commendable; I think (and think I think rightly) the laurel crown appointed for triumphing captains doth worthily (of all other learnings) honour the poet's triumph.

But because we have ears as well as tongues, and the lightest reasons that may be will seem to weigh greatly, if nothing be put in the counter-balance, let us hear, and, as well as can, ponder, what objections be made against this art, which may be worthy either of yielding or answering.

First, truly I note not only in these *misomousi*, poet-haters, but in all that kind of people who seek a praise by dispraising others, that they do prodigally spend a great many wandering words in quips and scoffs, carping and taunting at each thing which, by stirring the spleen, may stay the brain from a through-beholding the worthiness of the subject. Those kind of objections, as they are full of a very idle easiness, since there is nothing of so sacred a majesty but that an itching tongue may rub itself upon it, so deserve they no other answer, but instead of laughing at the jest, to laugh at the jester. We know a playing wit can praise the discretion of an ass the comfortableness of being in debt, and the joly commodity of being sick of the plague. So of the contrary side, if we will turn Ovid's verse.

*Ut lateat virtus proximate mali.*

'that good lie hid in nearness of the evil', Agrippa will be as merry in showing the vanity of science, as Erasmus was in commending of folly; neither shall any man or matter escape some touch of the smiling railers. But for Erasmus and Agrippa, they had another foundation than the superficial part would promise. Marry, these other pleasant fault-finders, who will correct the verb before they understand the noun, and confute others' knowledge before they confirm their own, I would have them only remember that scoffing cometh not of wisdom; so as the best title in true English they get with their merriments is to be called good fools; for have our grave forefathers ever termed that humorous kind of jesters.

But that which giveth greatest scope to their scorning humours is rhyming and versing. It is already said (and, as I think, truly said) it is not rhyming and versing that maketh poesy. One may be a poet without versing, and a versifier without poetry. But yet presuppose it were inseparable (as indeed it seemeth Scaliger judgeth) truly it were an inseparable commendation. For if *oratio* next to *ratio*, speech next to reason, be the greatest gift bestowed upon mortality, that cannot be praiseless which doth most polish that blessing of speech; which considers each word, not only (as a man may say) by his forcible quality, but by his best-measured quantity; carrying even in themselves a harmony, without perchance, number, measure, order, proportion be in our time grown odious. But lay aside the just praise it hath, by being the only fit speech for music (music, I say, the most divine striker of the senses), thus much is undoubtedly true, that if reading be foolish without remembering, memory being the only treasurer of knowledge, those words which are fittest for memory are likewise most convenient for knowledge.

Now, that verse far exceedeth prose in the knitting up of the memory, the reason is manifest; the words (besides their delight, which hath a great affinity to memory) being so set as one word cannot be lost but the whole work fails; which, accusing itself, calleth the remembrance back to itself, and so most strongly confirmeth it. Besides, one word so, as it were begetting another, as, be it in rhyme or measured verse, by the former a man shall have a near guess to the follower. Lastly, even they that have taught the art of memory have showed nothing so apt for it as a certain room divided into many places' well and thoroughly known. Now that hath the verse in effect perfectly, every word having his natural seat, which seat must needs make the words remembered. But what needeth more in a thing so known to all men? Who is it that ever was a scholar that doth not carry away some verses of Virgil, Horace, or Cato, which in his youth he learned, and even to his old age serve him for hourly lessions? as: 'Percontatorem fugito, nam garrulus idem est.' 'Dum sibi quisque placet, credula turba sumus'. But the fitness it hath for memory is notably proved by all delivery of arts: wherein for the most part, from Grammar to Logic, mathematic, physic, and the rest, the rules chiefly necessary to be borne away are compiled in verses. So that verse being in itself sweet and orderly, and being best for memory, the only handle of knowledge, it must be in jest that any man speak against it.

Now then go we to the most important imputations laid to the poor poets. For aught I can yet learn, they are these. First, there being many other more fruitful knowledges, a man might better spend his time in them than in this. Secondly, that it is the mother of lies. Thirdly, that it is the nurse of abuse, infecting us with many pestilent desires, with a siren's sweetness drawing the mind to the serpent's tale of sinful fancies, and herein especially comedies give the largest field to ear (as Chaucer saith); how both in other nations and in ours, before poets did soften us, we were full of courage, given to martial exercises, the pillars of manlike liberty, and not lulled asleep in shady idleness with poets' pastimes. And lastly and chiefly, they cry out with an open mouth, as if they had outshot Robin Hood, that Plato banished them out of his Commonwealth. Truly, this is much, if there be much truth in it.

First, to the first : that a man might better spend his time is a reason indeed ; but it doth (as they say) but *petere principium*. For if it be, as I affirm, that no learning is so good as that which teacheth and moveth to virtue, and that none can both teach and move thereto so much as poesy, than is the conclusion manifest that ink and paper cannot be to a more profitable purpose employed. And certainly, though a man should grant their first assumption, it should follow (methinks) very unwillingly, that good is not good because better is better. But I still and utterly deny that there is sprung out of earth a more fruitful knowledge.

To the second, therefore, that they should be the principal liars, I answer paradoxically, but truly, I think truly, that of all writers under the sun the poet is the least liar, and, though he would, as a poet can scarcely be a liar. The astronomer, with his cousin the geometrician, can hardly escape, when they take upon them to measure the height of the stars. How often, think you, do the physicians lie, when they aver things good for sickness, which afterwards send Charon a great number of souls drowned in a potion before they come to his ferry ? And no less of the rest, which take upon them to affirm. Now, for the poet, he nothing affirms, and therefore never lieth. For, as I take it, to lie is to affirm that to be true which is false ; so as the other artists, and especially the historian, affirming many things, can, in the cloudy knowledge of mankind, hardly escape from many lies. But the poet (as I said before) never affirmeth. The poet never maketh any circles about your imagination, to conjure you to believe for true what he writes. He citeth not authorities of other histories, but even for his entry calleth the sweet Muses to inspire into him a good invention ; in truth, not labouring to tell you what is or is not, but what should or should not be. And therefore, though he recount things not true, yet because he telleth them not for true, he lieth not ; without we will says that Nathan lied in his speech, before alleged, to David ; which, as a wicked man durst scarce say, so think I none so simple would say that Aesop lied in the tales of his beasts ; for who thinks that Aesop wrote it for actually true, were well worthy to have his name chronicled among the beasts he writeth of. What child is there that, coming to a play, and seeing *Thebes* written in great letters upon an old door, doth believe that it is Thebes ? If then a man can arrive, at that child's-age, to know that the poet's persons and doings are but pictures what should be, and not stories what have been, they will never give the lie to things not affirmatively, but allegorically and figuratively written. And therefore, as in history, looking for truth, they may go away full-fraught with a falsehood, so in poesy, looking for fiction, they shall use the narration but as an imaginative ground-plot of a profitable invention.

But hereto is replied, that the poets give names to men they write of, which argueth a conceit of an actual truth, and so, not being true, proves a falsehood. And doth the lawyer lie then, when, under the names of John a Stile and Jahn a Noakes he puts his case ? But that is easily answered. Their naming of men is but to make their picture the more lively, and not to build any history ; painting men, they cannot leave men nameless. We see we cannot play at chess but that we must give names to our chessmen ; and yet, methinks, he were a very partial champion of truth that would say we lied for giving a piece of wood the reverend title of a bishop. The poet nameth Cyrus or Aeneas no other way than to show what men of their fames, fortunes, and estates should do.

Poet names
people to
show what the
people will
little names
should do —

Their third is, how much it abuseth men's wit, training it to wonton sinfulness and lustful love : for indeed that is the principal, if not the only, abuse I can hear alleged. They say the comedies rather teach than reprehend amorous conceits. They say the lyric is larded with passionate sonnets, the elegiac weeps the want of his mistress, and that even to the heroical Cupid hath ambitiously climbed. Alas, Love, I would thou couldst as well defend thyself as thou canst offend others ! I would those on whom thou dost attend could either put thee away, or yield good reason why they keep thee ! But grant love of beauty to be a beastly fault (although it be very hard, since only man, and no beast, hath that gift to discern beauty) ; grant that lovely name of Love to deserve all hateful reproaches (although even some of my masters the philosophers spent a good deal of their lamp oil in setting forth the excellency of it) : grant, I say, whatsoever they will have granted ; that not only love but lust, but vanity, but (if they list) scurrility, possesseth many leaves of the poets' books ; yet think I, when this is granted, they will find their sentence may with good manners put the last words foremost, and not say that poetry abuseth man's wit, but that man's wit abuseth poetry.

For I will not deny, but that man's wit may make poesy, which should be *eikastike* (which some learned have defined : figuring forth good things), to be *phantastike* (which doth, contrariwise, infect the fancy with unworthy objects), as the painter that should give to the eye either some excellent perspective, or some fine picture, fit for building or fortification, or containing in it some notable example, as Abraham sacrificing his son Isaac, Judith killing Holofernes, David fighting with Goliath, may leave those, and please an ill-pleased eye with wanton shows of better-hidden matters. But what, shall the abuse of a thing make the right use odious ? Nay truly, though I yield that poesy may not only be abused, but that being abused, by the reason of his sweet charming force, it can do more hurt than any other army of words, yet shall it be so far from concluding that the abuse should give reproach to the abused, that contrariwise it is a good reason, that whatsoever, being abused, doth most harm, being rightly used (and upon the right use each thing conceiveth his title), doth most good. Do we not see the skill of physic (the best rampire to our often-assaulted bodies), being abused, teach poison, the most violent destroyer ? Doth not knowledge of law, whose end is to even and right all things, being abused, grow the crooked fosterer of horrible injuries ? Doth not (to go to the highest) God's word abused breed heresy, and his name abused become blasphemy ? Truly a needle cannot do much hurt, and as truly (with leave of ladies be it spoken) it cannot do much good. With a sword thou mayst kill thy father, and with a sword thou mayst defend thy prince and country. So that, as in their calling poets the fathers of lies they say nothing, so in this their argument of abuse they prove the commendation.

The allege herewith, that before poets began to be in price our nation hath set their heart's delight upon action, and not upon imagination ; rather doing things worthy to be written, than writing things fit to be done. What that before-time was, I think scarcely Sphinx can tell, since no memory is so ancient that hath the precedence of poetry. And certain it is that, in our plainest homeliness, yet never was the Albion nation without poetry. Marry, this argument, though it be levelled against poetry, yet it is indeed a chain-shot against all learning, or bookishness, as they commonly term it. Of such mind were certain Goths, of whom it is written that, having in the spoil of a famous city taken a fair library, one hangman (belike fit to execute the fruits of their wits) who had murdered a great number of bodies, would have set fire on it. 'No', said another very gravely, 'take heed what you do, for while they are busy about these toys, we shall with more leisure conquer their countries.' This indeed is the ordinary doctrine of ignorance, and many words sometime I have heard spent in it ; but because this reason is generally against all learning, as well as poetry, or rather, all learning but poetry ; because it were too large a digression to handle, or at least too superfluous (since it is manifest that all government of action is to be gotten by knowledge, and knowledge best by gathering many knowledges, which is reading), I only, with Horace, to him that is of that opinion,

'I give him free leave to be foolish'

*Jubeo stultum esse libenter* ;

for as for poetry itself, it is the freest from this objection, for poetry is the companion of the camps.

I dare undertake, Orlando Furioso, or honest King Arthur, will never displease a soldier ; but the quiddity of *ens*, and *prima materia*, will hardly agree with a corslet. And therefore, as I said in the beginning, even Turks and Tartars are delighted with poets. Homer, a Greek, flourished before Greece flourished. And if to a

M.A. (Pol. Sc. Eco. Eng. Hist.) B.Ed.
Mohyal Rainawari
SRINAGER-190003

slight conjecture a conjecture may be opposed, truly it may seem, that, as by him their learned men took almost their first light of knowledge, so their active men received their first motions of courage. Only Alexander's example may serve, who by Plutarch is accounted of such virtue, that Fortune was not his guide but his footstool ; whose acts speak for him, though Plutarch did not ; indeed the phoenix of warlike princes. This Alexander left his schoolmaster, living Aristotle, behind him, but took dead Homer with him. He put the philosopher Callisthenes to death for his seeming philosophical, indeed mutinous stubborness, but the chief thing he was ever heard to wish for was that Homer had been alive. He well found he received more bravery of mind by the pattern of Achilles, than by hearing the definition of fortitude. And therefore, if Cato misliked Fulvius for carrying Ennius with him to the field, it may be answered, that if Cato misliked it, the noble Fulvius liked it, or else he had not done it : for it was not the excellent Cato Uticensis (whose authority I would much more have reverenced), but it was the former, in truth a bitter punisher of faults, but else a man that had never well sacrificed to the Graces. He misliked and carried out upon all Greek learning, and yet, being 80 years old, began to learn it, belike fearing that Pluto understood not Latin. Indeed, the Roman laws allowed no person to be carried to the wars but he that was in the soldier' roll ; and therefore, though Cato misliked his unmustered person, he misliked not his work. And if he had, Scipio Nasica, judged by common consent the best Roman, loved him. Both the other Scipio brothers, who had by their virtues no less surnanes than of Asia and Africa, so loved him that they caused his body to be buried in their sepulchre. So as Cato's authority being but against his person, and that answered with so far greater than himself, is herein of no validity.

But now indeed my burden is great ; now Plato's name is laid upon me, whom, I must confess, of all philosophers I have ever esteemed most worthy of reverence ; and with great reason, since of all philosophers he is the most poetical. Yet if he will defile the fountain out of which his flowing streams have proceeded, let us boldly examine with what reasons he did it. First, truly, a man might maliciously object that Plato, being a philosopher, was a natural enemy of poets. For indeed, after the philosophers had picked out of the sweet mysteries of poetry the right discerning true points of knowledge. They forth with, putting it in method, and making a school art of that which the poets did only teach by a divine delightfulness, beginning to spurn at their guides, like ungrateful prentices, were not content to set up shops for themselves, but sought by all means to discredit their masters ; which by the force of delight being barred them, the less they could overthrow them, the more they hated them. For indeed, they found for Homer seven cities strove who should have him for their citizen, where many cities banished philosophers as not fit members to live among them. For only repeating certain of Euripides' verses, many Athenians had their lives saved of the Syracusians, when the Athenians themselves thought many philosophers unworthy to live. Certain poets, as Simonides and Pindar, had so prevailed with Hiero the First, that of a tyrant they made him a just king ; where Plato could do so little with Dionysius, that he himself of a philosopher was made a slave. But who should do thus, I confess, should requite the objections made against poets with like cavillations against philosophers ; as likewise one should do that should bid one read *Phaedrus* or *Symposium* in Plato, or the discourse of love in Plutarch, and see whether any poet do authorize abominable filthiness, as they do. Again, a man might ask out of what Commonwealth Plato did banish them. In sooth, thence where he himself alloweth community of women. So as belike this banishment grew not for effeminate wantonness, since little should poetical sonnets be hurtful when a man might have what woman he listed. But I honour philosophical instructions and bless the wits which bred them : so as they be not abused, which is likewise stretched to poetry.

St. Paul himself, who yet, for the credit of poets, allegeth twice two poets, and one of them by the name of a prophet, setteth a watchword upon philosophy—indeed upon the abuse. So doth Plato upon the abuse, not upon poetry. Plato found fault that the poets of his time filled the world with wrong opinions of the gods, making light tales of that unspotted essence, and therefore, would not have the youth depraved with such opinions. Herein may much be said ; let this suffice : the poets did not induce such opinions, but did imitate these opinions already induced. For all the Greek stories can well testify that the very religion of that time stood upon many and many-fashioned gods ; not taught so by the poets, but followed according to their nature of imitation. Who list may read in Plutarch the discourses of Isis and Osiris, of the cause why oracles ceased, of the divine providence, and see whether the theology of that nation stood not upon such dreams which the poets indeed superstitiously observed, and truly (since they had not the light of Christ) did much better in it than the philosophers, who, shaking off superstition, brought in atheism. Plato therefore (whose authority I had much rather justly construe than unjustly resist) meant not in general of poets, in those words of which Julius Scaliger saith, *Qua authoritate barbari quidam atque hispidi abuti velint ad poetas e republica exigendos* ; but only meant to drive out those wrong opinions of the Deity (whereof now, without further law, Christianity hath taken away all the hurtful belief), perchance (as he thought) nourished by the then esteemed poets. And a man need go no further than to Plato himself to know his meaning : who, in his dialogue called *Ion*, giveth high and rightly divine commendation to poetry. So as Plato, banishing the abuse, not the thing, not banishing it but giving due honour unto it, shall be our patron and not our adversary. For indeed I had much rather (since truly I may do it) show their mistaking of Plato (under whose lion's skin they would make an ass-like braying against poesy) than go about to overthrow his authority; whom, the wiser a man is, the more just cause he shall find to have in admiration; especially since he attributeth upto poesy more than myself do, namely, to be a very inspiring of a divine force, far above man's wit, as in the aforenamed dialogue in apparent.

Of the other side, who would show the honours have been by the best sort of judgments granted them, a whole sea of examples would present themselves: Alexanders, Caesars Scipios, all favourers of poets; Laelius called the Roman Socrates, himself a poet, so as part of *Heautontimoroumenos* in Terence was supposed to be made by him. And even the Greek Socrates, whom Apollo confirmed to be the only wise man, is said to have spent part of his old time in putting Aesop's fables into verses; and therefore full evil should it become his scholar, Plato, to put such words in his master's mouth against poets. But what need more? Aristotle writes the Art of Poesy: and why, if it should not be written? Plutarch teacheth the use to be gathered of them; and how, if they should not be read? And who reads Plutarch's either history or philosophy, shall find he trimmeth both their garments with guards of poesy. But I list not to defend poesy with the help of her underling historiography. Let it suffice that it is a fit soil for praise to dwell upon; and what dispraise may set upon it, is either overcome, or transformed into just commendation.

So that, since the excellencies of it may be so easily and so justly confirmed, and the low-creeping objections so soon trodden down; it not being an art of lies, but of true doctrine; not of effeminateness, but of notable stirring of courage; not of abusing man's wit, but of strengthening man's wit; not banished, but honoured by Plato; let us rather plant more laurels for to engarland our poets' heads (which honour of being laureate, as besides them only triumphant captains were, is a sufficient authority to show the price they ought to be had in) than suffer the ill-favouring breath of such wrong-speakers once to blow upon the clear springs of poesy.

But since I have run so long a career in this matter, methinks, before I give my pen a full stop, it shall be but a little more lost time to inquire why England (the mother of excellent minds) should be grown so hard a stepmother to poets, who certainly in wit ought to pass all others, since all only proceedeth from their wit, being indeed makers of themselves, not takers of others. How can I but exclaim.

"Oh muses tell me the cause why diety was offended"

*Musa, mihi causas memora, qua numine laeso?*

Sweet poesy, that hath anciently had kings, emperors, senators, great captains, such as, besides a thousand others, David, Adrian, Sophocles. Germanicus, not only to favour poets, but to be poets; and of our nearer times can present for her patrons a Robert, king of Sicily, the great King Francis of France, King James of Scotland; such cardinals as Bembus and Bibbiena; such famous preachers and teachers as Beza and Melancthon; so learned philosophers as Fracastorius and Scaliger; so great orators as Pontanus and Muretus; so piercing wits as George Buchanan; so grave counsellors as besides many, but before all, that Hospital of France, than whom (I think) that realm never brought forth a more accomplished judgement, more firmly builded upon virtue. I say these, with numbers of others, not only to read other's poesies, but to poetize for other's reading—that poesy, thus embraced in all other places, should only find in our time a hard welcome in England, I think the very earth lamenteth it, and therefore decketh our soil with fewer laurels than it was accustomed. For heretofore poets have in England also flourished; and, which is to be noted, even in those times when the trumpet of Mars did sound loudest. And now that an overfaint quietness should seem to strew the house for poets, they are almost in as good reputation as the mountebanks at Venice. Truely even that, as of the one side it giveth great prices to poesy, which, like Venus (but to better purpose), hath rather be troubled in the net with mras, than enjoy the homely quiet of Vulcan; so serves it for a piece of a reason whey they are less grateful to idle England, which now can scarce endure the pain of a pen.

Upon this necessarily followeth, that base men with servile wits undertake it who think it enough if they can be rewarded of the printer. And so as Epaminondas is said, with the honour of his virtue, to have made an office, by his exercising it, which before was contemptible, to become highly respected; so these men, no more but setting their names to it, by their own disgracefulness disgrace the most graceful poesy. For now, as if all the Muses were got with child, to bring forth bastard poets, without any commission they do post over the banks of Helicon, till they make the readers more weary than posthorses; while in the meantime, they,

*Queis meliore luto finxit praecordia Titan*,

are better content to suppress the out-flowing of their wit, than, by publishing them, to be accounted knights of the same order.

But I that, before ever I durst aspire unto the dignity, and admitted into the company of the paper-blurrers, do find the very true cause of our wanting estimation is want of desert, taking upon us to be poets in despite of Pallas. Now, wherein we want desert were a thankworthy labour to express; but if I knew; I should have mended myself. But I, as I never desired the title, so have I neglected the means to come by it. Only, overmastered by some thoughts, I yielded an inky tribute upto them. Marry, they that delight in poesy itself should seek to know what they do, and how they do; and especially look themselves in an unflattering glass of reason, if they be inclinable unto it. For poesy must not be drawn by the ears; it must be gently led, or rather it must lead; which was partly the cause that made the ancient-learned affirm it was a divine gift, and no human skill: since all other knowledges lie ready for any that hath strength of wit; a poet no industry can make, if his own genius be not carried unto it; and therefore is it an old proverb, *Orator fit, Poeta nascitur*.

Yet confess I always that as the fertilest ground must be manured, so must the highest-flying wit have a Daedalus to guide him. That Deadalus, they say, both in this and other, hath three wings to bear itself up into the air of due commendation: that is, art, imitation, and exercise. But these, neither artificial rules nor imitative patterns, we much cumber ourselves withal. Exercise indeed we do, but that very fore-backwardly: for where we should exercise to know, we exercise as having known; and so is our brain delivered of much matter which never was begotten by knowledge. For, there being two principal parts, matter to be expressed by words, and words to express the matter, in neither we use art or imitation rightly. Our matter is *quodlibet* indeed, though wrongly performing Ovid's verse,

> *Quicquid conabar dicere, versus erat*:

never marshalling it into an assured rank, that almost the readers cannot tell where to find themselves.

Chaucer, undoubtedly, did excellently in his *Troilus and Criseyde*; of whom, truly, I know not whether to marvel more, either that he in that misty time could see so clearly, or that we in this clear age walk so stumblingly after him. Yet had he great wants, fit to be forgiven in so reverent antiquity. I account the *Mirror of Magistrates* meetly furnished of beautiful parts, and in the Earl of Surrey's *Lyrics* many things tasting of a noble birth, and worthy of a noble mind. The *Shepheardes Calender* hath much poetry in his eclogues, indeed worthy the reading, if I be not deceived. That same framing of his style to an old rustic language I dare not allow, since neither Theocritus in Greek, Virgil in Latin, nor Sannazzaro in Italian did affect it. Besides these, I do not remember to have seen but few (to speak boldly) printed, that have poetical sinews in them; for proof whereof, let but most of the verses be put in prose, and then ask the meaning, and it will be found that one verse did but beget another, without ordering at the first what should be at the last; which becomes a confused mass of words, with a tingling sound of rhyme, barely accompanied with reason.

Our tragedies and comedies (not without cause cried out against), observing rules neither of honest civility nor of skilful poetry, excepting *Gorboduc*, (again, I say, of those that I have seen)' which, notwithstanding, as it is full of stately speeches and well-sounding phrases, climbing to the height of Seneca's style, and as full of notable morality, which it doth most delightfully teach, and so obtain the very end of Poesy; yet in truth it is very defectious in the circumstances; which grieveth me, because it might not remain as an exact model of all tragedies. For it is faulty both in place and time, the two necessary companions of all corporal actions. For where the stage should always represent but one place, and the uttermost time presupposed in it should be, both by Aristotle's precept and common reason, but one day, there is both many days, and many places, inartificially imagined.

But if it be so in *Gorboduc*, how much more in all the rest, where you shall have Asia of the one side, and Africa of the other, and so many other under-kingdoms, that the player, when he cometh in, must ever begin with telling where he is, or else the tale will not be conceived ? Now ye shall have three ladies walk to gather flowers, and than we must believe the stage to be a garden. By and by we hear news of shipwreck in the same place, and then we are to blame if we accept it not for a rock. Upon the back of that comes out a hideous monster with fire and smoke, and then the miserable beholders are bound to take it for a cave. While in the meantime two armies fly in, represented with four swords and bucklers, and then what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field ?

Now, of time they are much more liberal. For ordinary it is that two young princes fall in love ; after many traverses, she is got with child, delivered of a fair boy ; he is lost, groweth a man, falls in love, and is ready to get another child ; and all this in two hours' space : which, how absurd it is in sense, even sense may imagine, and art hath taught, and all ancient examples justified, and at this day, the ordinary players in Italy will not err in. Yet will some bring in an example of *Eunuchus* in Terence, that containeth matter of two days, yet far short of twenty years. True it is, and so was it to be played in two days, and so fitted to the time is set forth. And though Plautus have in one place done amiss, let us hit with him, and not miss with him.

But they will say, how then shall be set forth a story, which containeth both many places and many times ? And do they not know that a tragedy is tied to the laws of poesy, and not of history ; not bound to follow the story, but having liberty either to feign a quite new matter, or to frame the history to the most tragical conveniency ? Again, many things may be told which cannot be showed, if they know the difference betwixt reporting and representing. As, for example, I may speak (though I am here) of Peru, and in speech digress from that to the description of Calicut ; but in action I cannot represent it without Pacolet's horse. And so was the manner the ancients took, by some *Nuntius* to recount things done in former time or other place.

Lastly, if they will represent an history, they must not (as Hoarce saith) begin *ab ovo*, but they must come to the principal point of that one action which they will represent. By example this will be best expressed. I have a story of young Polydorus, delivered for safety's sake with great riches, by his father Priam to Polymnestor, king of Thrace, in the Trojan war time. He, after some years, hearing the overthrow of priam, for to make the treasure his own, murdereth the child ; the body of the child is taken up by Hecuba ; she, the same day, findeth a sleight to a revenged most cruelly of the tyrant. Where now would one of our tragedy-writers begin, but with the delivery of the child ? Then should be sail over into Thrace, and so spend I know not how many years, and travel numbers of places. But where doth Euripides ? Even with the finding of the body, leaving the rest to be told by the spirit of Polydorus. This need no further to be enlarged ; the dullest wit may conceive it.

But besides these gross absurdities, how all their plays be neither right tragedies nor right comedies, mingling kings and clowns, not because the matter so carrieth it, but thurst in clowns by head and shoulders to play a part in majestical matters, with neither decency nor discretion : so as neither the admiration and commiseration, nor the right sportfulness, is by their mongrel tragi-comedy obtained. I know Apuleius did somewhat so, but that is a thing recounted with space of time, not represented in one moment ; and I know the ancients have one or two examples of tragi-comedies. as Plautus hath *Amphitryo*. But, if we mark them well, we shall find that they never, or very daintily, match hornpipes and funerals. So falleth it out that, having indeed no right comedy, in that comical part of our tragedy, we have nothing but scurrility, unworthy of any chaste ears, or some extreme show of doltishness, indeed fit to lift up a loud laughter, and nothing else ; where the whole tract of a comedy should be full of delight, as the tragedy should be still maintained in a well-raised admiration.

But our comedians think there is no delight without laughter ; which is very wrong, for though laughter may come with delight, yet cometh it not of delight, as though delight should be the cause of laughter ; but well may one thing breed both together. Nay, rather in themselves they have, as it were, a kind of contrariety : for delight we scarcely do but in things that have a conveniency to ourselves or to the general nature : laughter almost ever cometh of things most disproportioned to ourselves and nature. Delight hath a joy in it, either permanent or present. Laughter hath only a scornful tickling. For example, we are ravished with delight to see a fair woman, and yet are far from being moved to laughter. We laugh at deformed creatures, wherein certainly we cannot delight. We delight a good chances, we laugh at mischances ; we delight to hear the happinesss of our friends or country, at which he were worthy to be laughed at that would laugh. We shall, contrarily, laugh sometimes to find a matter quite mistaken and go down the hill against the bias, in the mouth of some such men, as for the respect of them one shall be heartily sorry, yet he cannot choose but laugh ; and so is rather pained than delighted with laughter. Yet deny I not but that they may go well together. For as in Alexander's picture well set out we delight without laughter, and in twenty mad antics we laugh without delight, so in Hercules, painted with his great beard and furious countenance, in woman's attire spinning at Omphale's commandment, it breedeth both delight and laughter. For the representing of so strange a power in love procureth delight ; and the scornfulness of the action stirreth laughter.

But I speak to this purpose, that all the end of the comical part be not upon such scornful matters as stir laughter only, but, mixed with it, that delightful teaching which is the end of poesy. And the great fault even in that point of laughter, and forbidden plainly by Aristotle, is that they stir laughter in sinful things, which are rather execrable than ridiculous ; or in miserable, which are rather to be pitied than scorned. For what is it to make folks gape at a wretched beggar or a beggarly clown ; or against law of hospitality, to jest at strangers, because they speak not English so well as we do ? What do we learn, since it is certain.

> *Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se,*
> *Quam quod ridiculous homines facit* ?

wretched poverty has
nothing harder in
against itself than that
it makes
men
ridiculous

But rather a busy loving courtier, a heartless threatening Thraso, a self-wise-seeming schoolmaster, a wry transformed traveller : these if we saw walk in stag-names, which we play naturally, therein were delightful laughter and teaching delightfulness : as in the other, the tragedies of Buchanan do justly bring forth a divine admiration. But I have lavished out too many words of this play-matter. I do it because as they are excelling parts of poesy, so is there none so much used in England, and none can be more pitifully abused ; which, like an unmannerly daughter showing a bad education, causeth her mother Poesy's honesty to be called in question.

Other sorts of poetry almost have we none, but that lyrical kind of songs and sonnets : which, Lord, if He gave us so good minds, how well it might be employed, and with how heavenly fruit both private and public, in singing the praises of the immortal beauty, the immortal goodness of that God who giveth us hands to write and wits to conceive ; of which we might well want words, but never matter ; of which we could turn our eyes to nothing, but we should ever have new-budding occasions. But truly many of such writings as come under the banner of unresistible love, If I were a mistress, would never persuade me they were in love ; so coldly they apply fiery speeches, as men that had rather read lovers' writings, (and so caught up certain swelling phrases, which hang together like a man which once told me the wind was at north-west and by south, because he would be sure to name winds enough) than that in truth they feel those passions, which easily (as I think) may be bewrayed by that same forcibleness, or *energia* (as the Greeks call it) of the write. But let this be a sufficient though short note, that we miss the right use of the material point of poesy.

Now, for the outside of it, which is words, or (as I may term it) diction, it is even well worse. So is that honey-flowing matron Eloquence apparelled, or rather disguised, in a courtesan-like painted affectation : one time, with so far-fetched words, they may seem monsters, but must seem strangers to any poor Englishman ; another time with coursing of a letter, as if they were bound to follow the method of a dictionary; another time with figures and flowers, extremely winter-starved. But I would this fault were only peculiar to versifiers, and had not as large possession among prose-printers, and (which is to be marvelled) among many scholars, and (which is to be pitied) among some preachers. Truly I could wish, if at least I might be so bold to wish in a thing beyond the reach of my capacity, the diligent imitators of Tully and Demosthenes (most worthy to be imitated) did not so much keep Nizolian paper-books of their figures and phrases, as by attentive translation (as it were) devour them whole, and make them wholly theirs. For now they cast sugar and spice upon every dish that is served to the table ; like those Indians, not content to wear ear-rings at the fit and natural place of the ears, but they will thrust jewels through their nose and lips, because they will be sure to be fine. Tully, when he was to drive out drive Catiline as it were with a thunderbolt of eloquence, often used that figure of repetition, as *Vivit. Vivit ? Imo in senatum venit*, etc. Indeed, inflamed with a well-grounded rage, he would have his words (as it were) double out of his mouth, and so do that artificially, which we see men in choler do naturally. And we, having noted the grace of those words, hale them in sometimes to a familiar epistle, when it were to much choler to be choleric.

Now for similitudes, in certain printed discourses. I think all herbarists, all stories of beasts, fowls, and fishes are rifled up, that they come in multitudes to wait upon any of our conceits, which certainly is as absurd a surfeit to the ears as is possible. For the force of a similitude not being to prove anything to a contrary disputer, but only to explain to a willing hearer ; when that is done, the rest is a most tedious prattling, rather over-swaying the memory from the purpose whereto they were applied than any whit informing the judgement, already either satisfied, or by similitudes not to be satisfied. For my part, I do not doubt, when Antonius and Crassus, the great Forefathers of Cicero in eloquence, the one (as Cicero testifieth of them) pretended not to know art, the other not to set by it, because with a plan sensibleness they might win credit to popular ears ; which credit is the nearest step to persuasion, which persuasion is the chief mark of Oratory,— I do not doubt (I say) but that they used these knacks very sparingly ; which, who doth generally use, any man may see doth dance to his own music, and so be noted by the audience more careful to speak curiously than to speak truly.

Undoubtedly (as least may opinion undoubtedly) I have found in divers small-learned courtiers a more sound style than in some professors of learning : of which I can guess no other cause, but that the courtier, following that which by practice he findeth to nature, therein (though he know it not) doth according to art, though not by art ; where the other, using art to show art, and not to hide art (as in these cases he should do), flieth from nature, and indeed abuseth art.

But what ? Methinks I deserve to be pounded for straying from Poetry to Oratory : but both have an affinity in this wordish consideration, that I think this digression will make my meaning receive the fuller understanding : which is not to take upon me to teach poets how they should do, but only, finding myself sick among the rest, to show some one or two spots of the common infection grown among the most part of writers ; that, acknowledging ourselves somewhat away, we may bend to the right use both of matter and manner ; whereto our language giveth us great occasion, being indeed capable of any excellent exercising of it. I know some will say it is a mingled language. Any why not so much the better, taking the best of both the other ? Another will say it wanteth grammar. Nay truly, it hath that praise, that it wanteth not grammar : for grammar it might have, but it needs it not ; being so easy of itself, and so void of those cumbersome differences of cases, genders, moods, and tenses, which, I think, was a piece of the Tower of Babylon's curse, that a man should be put to school to learn his mother-tongue. But for the uttering sweetly and properly the conceits of the mind, which is the end of speech, that hath it equally with any other tongue in the world : and is particularly happy in compositions of two or three words together,—near the Greek, far beyond the Latin, which is one of the greatest beauties can be in a language.

ancient and modern

Now, of versifying there are two sorts, the one ancient, the other modern. the ancient marked the quantity of each syllable, and according to that framed his verse ; the modern observing only number (with some regard of the accent), the chief life of it standeth in that like sounding of the words, which we call rhyme. Whether of these be the more excellent would bear many speeches ; the ancient (no doubt) more fit for music, both words and tune observing quantity, and more fit lively to express diver passions, by the low or lofty sound of the well-weighed syllable. The latter likewise, with his rhyme, striketh a certain music to the ear : and, in fine since it doth delight, though by another way, it obtains the same purpose ; there being in either, sweetness, and wanting in neither, majesty. Truly the English, before any other vulgar language I know, is fit for both sorts : for, for the ancient, the Italian is so full of vowels that it must ever be cumbered with elisions ; the Dutch so, of the other side, with consonants, that they cannot yield the sweet sliding fit for a verse ; the French, in his whole language, hath not one word that hath his accent in the last syllable saving two, called *antepenultima*, and little more hath the Spanish ; and, therefore, very gracelessly may they use dactyls. The English is subject to none of these defects. Now, for the rhyme, though we do not observe quantity, yet we observe the accent very precisely, which other languages either cannot do, or will not do so absolutely. That *caesura*, or breathing-place in the midst of the verse, neither Italian nor Spanish have, the French and we never almost fail of.

Lastly, even the very rhyme itself the Italian cannot put in the last syllable, by the French named the masculine rhyme, but still in the next to the last, which the French call the female, or the next before that, which the Italians term *sdrucciola*. The example of the former is *buono* ; *suono*, of the *sdrucciola* is *femina* : *semina*. The French, of the other side, hath both the male, as *bon* : *son*, and the female, as *plaise* : *taise*, but the *sdrucciola* he hath not : where the English hath all three, as *due* : *true*, *father* : *rather*, *motion* : *potion* ; with much more which might be said, but that I find already the triflingness of this discourse is much too much enlarged.

So that since the ever-praiseworthy poesy is full of virtuebreeding delightfulness, and void of no gift that ought to be in the noble name of learning ; since the blames laid against it are either false or feeble ; since the cause why it is not esteemed in England is the fault of poet-apes, not poets ; since, lastly, our tongne is most fit to honour Poesy, and so be honoured by Poesy ; I conjure you all that have had the evil luck to read this ink-wasting toy of mine, even in the name of the nine Muses, no more to scorn the sacred mysteries of Poesy ; no more to laugh at the name of poets, as though they were next inheritors to fools ; no more to jest at the reverend title of 'a rhymer' ; but to believe, with Aristotle, that they were the ancient treasurers of the Grecians' divinity ; to believe, with Bembus, that they were first bringers-in of all civility ; to believe, with Scaliger, that no philosopher's precepts can sooner make you an honest man than the reading of Virgil ; to believe, with Clauserus, the translator of Cornutus, that it pleased the heavenly Diety, by Hesiod and Homer, under the veil of fables, to give us all knowledge, logic, rhetoric, philosophy natural and moral, and *quid non* ? to believe, with me, that there are many mysteries contained in poetry, which of purpose were written darkly, lest by profane wits is should be abused ; to believe, with Landino, that they are so beloved of the gods that whatsoever they write proceeds of a divine fury ; lastly, to believe themselves, when they tell you they will make you immortal by their verses.

Thus doing, your name shall flourish in the printers' shops ; thus doing, you shall be of kin to many a poetical preface ; thus doing, you shall be most fair, most rich, most wise, most all ; you shall dwell upon superlatives. Thus doing, though you be *libertino patre natus*, you shall suddenly grow *Herculea proles*.

*Si quid mea carmina possunt.*

Thus doing, your soul shall be placed with Dante's Beatrice, or Virgil's Anchises. But if (fie of such a but) you be born so near the dull-making cataract of Nilus, that you cannot hear the planet-like music of poetry ; if you have so earth-creeping a mind that it cannot life itself up to look to the sky of poetry, or rather, by a certain rustical disdain, will become such a mome as to be a Momus of poetry ; then, though I will not wish unto you the ass's ears of Midas, nor to be driven by a poet's verses (as Bubonax was) to hang himself, nor to be rhymed to death, as is said to be done in Ireland ; yet thus much curse I must send you, in the behalf of all poets, that while you live, you live in love, and never get favour for lacking skill of a sonnet ; and when you die, your memory die from the earth for want of an epitaph.

Poet- is Superior to Lawyer -
Philosopher. Historian and each
and every creative genius.

# 9

# Critical and Explanatory Comments

**Page 58**

*Edward Wotton*—half brother of the poet, Sir Henry Wotton. He was one of Sidney's intimate friends.

*Horsemanship*—a practised horsemen, Sidney was also interested in its theory ("*contemplations*").

*Esquire*—equerry (officer in charge of stables).

*Wit*—'understanding'.

*Faculty*—branch of learning. *Abiders*—stayers, those who stay.

*Pedanteria*—pedantry, a piece of mere bookish learning.

*Am provoked*—an allusion to Gosson's attack on poets and poetry.

*His master*—Pugliano (here Sidney is ironical).

*Pitiful*—compassionate. *Available*—sound, valid.

*The former*—horsemanship.

*The silly later*—unfortunate poetry.

**Page 59**

*Names of philosopher*—Plato, for instance.

*The first light-giver to ignorance*—"The earliest poets were the first philosophers" is a commonplace of Renaissance criticism and is derived from classical writers. Spingarn in his *History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance*, says that this passage strikes the keynote of the Renaissance theory of poetry.

*The hedgehog*—the reference is to the fable of the hedgehog and the snake.

*The vipers*—a common Elizabethan symbol of ingratitude.

*Musaeus*—legendary pre-Homeric Greek poet, supposed to be the pupil of Orpheus.

*Hesiod*—Greek poet of the eighth century B.C., the author of *Works and Days* and *Theogony*.

*Skill*—art.

*Orpheus*—According to legend, a musician who had the power to charm even trees and rocks. He journeyed to Hades to recover his dead wife Eurydice. *Amphion*—another great poet-musician.

*Linus*—a legendary Greek poet.

*Beastly*—uncivilized. *Stony*—hard-hearted.

*Livius Andronicus*—Livius (c. 284—204 B.C.) is generally regarded as the earliest Latin poet and dramatist.

*Ennius*—Roman epic and tragic poet (239—169 B.C.) he is often called 'father of Roman poetry'.

*Science*—knowledge. *Baccaccio*—Italian novelist (1313—75).

*Dante*—Dante Alighieri (1265—1321), the greatest Italian poet, the author of *Divina Commedia.*

*Petrarch*—(1304—74), the greatest Italian poet after Dante and "the father of the sonnet".

*Gower*—The 'moral' John Gower (1340—1408) a contemporary of Chaucer.

*Foregoing*—precedent, example.

*Thales*, *Empedocles* and *Parmenides*—early Greek philosophers and poets. Empedocles' death by jumping from Etna is the theme of Arnold's *Empedocles on Etna.*

*Pythagoras*—Greek philosopher and mathematician (582—507 B.C.) well-known for his doctrine of the transmigration of souls.

*Phocylides*—a Greek poet.

*Tyrtaeus*—a lame schoolmaster of Greece famous for his war lyrics.

*Solon*—Athenian legislator and one of the Seven Wise Men of Greece. He is supposed to have written an epic called *Atlantis*, after the vanished continent mentioned by Plato in his *Critias.*

*Feigneth*—imagines ; fiction, according to Sidney, is the very essence of poetry.

**Page 60**

*Gyges' ring*—the magic ring found by the shepherd Gyges in the underworld. It made him invisible and ultimately the King of Lydia.

*Apollo's garden*—Apollo was the Greek god of poetry and song. '*To walk into Apollo's garden*' means 'to enjoy poetry'.

*Fashion*—manner ; *Weight*—authority.

*Herodotus*—Greek historian (484—425 B.C.) called, "father of history". His *History* was divided into nine books named after the nine Muses, the Greek goddesses of learning.

*Passionate*—impassioned. *Judgements*—understanding. *Areytos*—song accompanied by dance ; *the "Indians"*—the red Indians, the inhabitants of Central America.

*Some of whom*—Edward I, for instance.

*Stand Upon*—take our stand on. *But even*—if only.

*Vates*—In Latin, the word means 'prophet'. *Conjoined*—related.

*Vaticinium and vaticinari*—'a prophecy' and 'to prophesy'.

**Page 61**

*Sortes Virgiliance*—The oracle of Virgil. It was widely believed that if anybody wanted to consult the "Sortes Virgiliance", or oracle of Virgil, he should open Virgil's works at random and the lines he would read indicated his destiny. Thus Virgil was regarded as an oracle or prophet.

*Albinus*—Governor of Britain in 192 A.D. He was killed in battle in A.D. 197. He foolishly rebelled against the Roman Emperor, Septimius Severus.

*Arma amens*—From Virgil's *Aeneid.* "Distractedly do I take up arms ; but little purpose is there in arms."

*Performed it*—fulfilled the prediction.

*Charms*—Charm originally meant 'incantation'.

*Delphos*—actually Delphi, where the famous temple of Apollo was situated. *Sibylla*—an ancient prophetess, a very old woman.

*Conceit*—imagination ; idea.

*Reasonableness...vates*—justification of calling a poet a "*vates*", *i.e.* a prophet.

*Psalms*—poetic hymns, generally ascribed to the Jewish king David and forming a part of *the Old Testament*.

*Songs*—The word "psalm" originally meant a song sung to the accompaniment of the Greek musical instrument *psalterion*.

*Hebricians*—Hebrew scholars.

*His handling his prophecy*—the manner in which he deals with his prophecy.

*Merely*—absolutely ; entirely.

*Prosopopoeia*—The Greek word for personification, the figure of speech by which inanimate objects or abstract qualities are endowed with human qualities.

*Everlasting beauty*—the 'true' and 'divine' beauty mentioned by Plato in his *Symposium* and elsewhere.

*Poiein*—the Greek verb meaning 'to make'.

*Met with*—agreed with.

*A maker*—both Chaucer and Spenser use '*to make*' in the sense of '*to write verse*'.

*Nature*—created world.

**Page 62**

*Standeth upon*—is concerned with.

*Are compassed within the circle of a question*—are limited by the scope and purpose of the questions they answer. Here, as elsewhere,

[illegible] Dhar
[illegible] Hi 97 B.Ed.
Motiyar Rainawari
SRINAGAR-190003
KASHMIR

Sidney is doing the established *artes* less than justice, so that he may bring out the infinite scope of poetry, the more clearly and startlingly.

*The Metaphysics*—Metaphysician, is concerned with how 'realities' exist in man's mind : but, Sidney adds, such 'abstract and second notions' derive from first notions ('reality') so that, basically, the metaphysician is also dependents upon 'nature' (Oxford).

*Supernatural*—metaphysical (as opposed to natural).

*Only the poet*—Poetry is imitation of Nature, but it is imitation not in the usual sense of copying. It is imitation in a special sense. Sidney's concept of *imitation* of Nature is equivalent to an idealization of Nature. His views of imitation is creative.

*Another nature*—The poet's inventive faculty makes him create a new world which is different from the 'reality' of our everyday life.

*Cyclops*—'creatures' with one circular eyes in the centre of the forehead ; in Homer, a race of one-eyed giants of Sicily.

*Chimeras*—a fabulous fire-breathing monster.

*Furies*—in classical mythology, the three goddesses of revenge and punishment.

*Zodiac*—zone of the heavens (divided into twelve sections or sings) being the circle within which nature is confined. Within it move the Sun, the Moon and the Planets.

*Her world...golden*—Poetry turns all that is brass into pure gold.

*Brazen*—perhaps with reference to the age bronze, which was supposed to have been preceded by the age of silver and the age of gold.

*For whom*—for whose benefit. *Cunning*—skill.

*Theagenes*—the hero of Heliodorus' love story of Theagenes and Chariclea told in his *Aethiopica.*

*Pylades*—the steadfast friend who accompanied Orestes in all his wanderings and married his sister, Electra. The story is told in Sophocles *Electra* and Euripides *Iphigenia in Tauris.*

*Orlando*—the hero of Ariosto's poem *Orlando Furioso* (1532). He is regarded as the model of a perfect knight.

*Xenophon's Cyrus*—Cyrus the Great, founder of the Persian empire. Xenophon (430-–355 B.C.), Greek historian and Socrates's disciple, presents Cyrus as the model of statemanship and valour. in *Cyropaedia* or 'Education of Cyrus', a historical novel with a moral purpose.

*Virgil's Aenaes*—Aeneas was a Greek prince who escaped from Troy to Carthage (it is here that he met Dido). Finally he went to

Italy, and there his descendants founded Rome. His wanderings and adventures are described by Virgil in *the Aeneid*.

*The works of the one be essential*—the works of nature actually 'are'.

*That idea or fore-conceit*—According to Sidney's interpretation of a fundamentally Platonic argument, the essence of poetry is not 'in the work itself' but in the poet's ability to invent original (and valid) concepts or ideas.

*Not wholly imaginative*—not merely as images in the mind, and therefore without any truth or reality and substance.

*Not only to make a Cyrus*—Cyrus is not any real person, but a 'poetic' example of perfection worthy to be studied and followed.

*Jestingly conceived*—taken as a jest.

*Heavenly Maker*—God.

*That Maker*—the poet.

*Second nature*—Man is the first nature ; the second nature consists of the rest of creation placed under man's dominion.

*He*—man.

**Page 63**

*Divine breath*—inspiration.

*Her*—nature's.

*Erected wit*—elevated intellect.

*Infected will*—owing to the 'original' sin, the sun of Adam in eating the Forbidden Fruit.

*The credulous of*—those inclined to believe in.

*The name*—of poet (maker).

*Adam etc*—At the end of his exposition of fundamentals, Sidney adds a personal, religious overtone, although he realize that his arguments may be shared by few. Sinful man cannot recover the perfections of the first state of nature because, since 'that first accursed fall of Adam', his will is no longer wholly bent upon truth and goodness. But his wit—*i.e.* the rational intellect which is characteristic of man and which relates man to his Maker—may still be 'erected' in an attempt to gain 'ideas' of lost perfections. Sidney's poet is a man who cultivates this ability to the utmost of his powers. His 'ideas', being ideas of 'first nature', 'with the force of a divine breath' show 'another nature', to an imperfect world that lives in 'second nature'. Thus poesy is the effort of an individual mind to bridge the gap between the sinful state and the lost paradise, or 'golden' world of man.

The last few lines not only provide a clue to the essence of Sidney's theory, but also explain the unique value Sidney attaches to the art of poetry—(**Oxford**).

*Opening*—exposition.

*Mimesis*—Aristotle's well-known definition of poetry as 'mimesis' has been variously interpreted. By 'imitation' of nature the Greek philosopher did never mean an exact reproduction of nature, whatever else he might have meant.

*Poesy therefore etc.*—In his definition of poesy Sidney makes no attempt at originality but borrows three commonplaces af sixteenth century literary theory, based mainly upon Aristotle, Plutarch, and Horace :

1. poesy is mimesis or imitation, *i.e.* a representation or images of something else—'ideas' ;
2. in representing these images verbally, a poem is, as it were, a painting in words ;
3. but art is only a means towards an end, and the aim of the art of poesy is 'to teach and delight'—(**Oxford**).

Sidney's phrase "a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth" clearly suggests that the poet is a painter rather than a photographer. "To counterfeit" is to "to represent as by a picture".

For the phrase, "a speaking picture", and for the aim of poetry, "to teach and delight", Sidney is indebted to Horace.

*Three several kinds*—Sidney might have been influenced by the Italian critic, J.C. Scaliger, who in his *Poetics* (1561) divides poetry into (*i*) religious, (*ii*) philosophical, and (*iii*) poetry of man.

*Solomon*—son of David and kind of the Hebrews. Several books of *the Bible* are ascribed to him. He is supposed to have been a man of great wisdom and the husband of many wives.

*Moses and Deborah*—prophets.

*Job*—a book of the *Old Testament* in a dialogue form. The theme is the problem of good and evil in the world.

*Tremellius and Junius*—Biblical scholars of the sixteenth century.

*The Holy Ghost*—the Holy Spirit or God who is supposed to have inspired the poetic books of *the Bible.*

*Wrong divinity*—from the Christian view-point.

*Homer*—certain hymns were formerly supposed to have been written by the poets of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

*St. James's counsel*—"Is any among you afflicted ? Let him pray. Is any merry ? Let him sing psalms."

*Cato*—Dionysius Cato, author of a popular ethical treatise in Latin verse.

*Lucretius*—a Roman poet author of the celebrated poem, *De rerum natura.*

*Georgics*—a pastoral poem of Virgil in praise of rural life, inspired by Hesiod.

*Manilius*—a Roman poet of the Augustan age, author of *Astronomica.*

*Pontanus*—Giovanni Pontano (1426—1503). Italian author of an astrological work.

*Lucan*—Latin poet (A.D. 39—A.D. 65), author of the epic *Pharsalia*, which deals with the civil war between Caesar and Pompey.

*Constant*—unwavering ; unchanging.

*The proposed subject*—Such poems are necessarily limited by the topics they deal with, whereas true poetry may invent an infinite variety of topics. It had been argued, therefore, that 'this second sort' was verse, not poetry. Sidney, who evidently enjoyed their 'sweetly uttered knowledge', however limited in scope, leaves the dispute to others.

*Betwixt whom*—The 'second sort' of poets (or painters) are necessarily minor artists, because they copy out particular things for their own sake, unlike the third category who invent new 'ideas'—**(Oxford)**.

*Lucretia*—virtuous lady famed in Roman legends. A victim of Sextus "Tarquinius' lust, she prayed to her husband Tarquinius Collatinus to avenge her and committed suicide.

**Page 64**

*For these third*—These poets, the 'right' ones, do not represent things as they are, but as they ought to be.

*These*—'right' kind of poets. *The first and most noble sort*—religious poets.

*Waited on*—associated with.

*Do merely make to imitate*—are entirely creative.

*Merely*—entirely.

*Scope*—the object aimed at ; purpose.

*Want there not*—there is no lack of.

*Denominations*—there was no fixed division of literary types and different critics had their own individual groupings. Sidney has arranged the kinds of poetry according to their importance and it is to be noted that the lyrics comes second in the list, even before tragic.

*Iambic*—bitter satirical poetry of direct attack.

*Numberous*—metrical.

*Verse being but an ornament*—Sidney's view that *verse* or *metre* is not essential to poetry was not widely current in his own days.

This shows his originality, though he might have found indirect support for his views in Aristotle.

*No cause to poetry*—Not in any way essential to poetry.

*Effigiem justi imperii*—the representation of a just government.

*As Cicero Saith*—in his letter to his brother Quintus, Cicero wrote : "Cyrus ille a Xenophonte non ad historiae fides criptum est, sed ad effigiem justi imperii". ("*The Cyrus* of Xenophon is written, not in accordance with the truth of history, but to present the ideal of a just empire")

*Absolute*—prefect. *Sugared*—sweet and subtle.

*Right describing note*—the distinguishing feature of poetry.

*Passed all in all*—surpassed all things in all respects.

*As in matter...beyond them*—as poetry is superior to all other arts in subject matter, so it should surpass them in its expression.

*Table-talk fashion*—casually ; lightly.

*Peizing*—weighing. The poet, is not only accurate in his choice of words but also 'appropriate'.

*His*—its. *Anatomies*—analyses. *Sentence*—judgment. *Wit*—intellect.

*Enabling*—strengthening. *Conceit*—conceiving power, imagination.

*The final end...degenerate souls*—All learning aims at inspiring people to know and achieve perfection. But absolute perfection, however, cannot be achieved by man, for he is victim of the "original sin" of Adam.

*Clayey lodging*—sinful bodies.

**Page 65**

*Inclination*—natural bent of mind. *Many-formed*—diverse.

*Having this scope*—aiming to achieve knowledge, and through knowledge, the uplifting of the mind and soul.

*Dungeon of the body*—Plato thought that the body was the prison of the soul.

*His*—its *i.e.* the mind.

*Proof*—experience. *Serving*—subordinate.

*Architektonike*—Chief knowledge to which every-thing else is subordinate. It is the art that studies the ways of achieving the greatest common good.

*Next end*—immediate object.—*Ending end*—the ultimate end.

*That*—*i.e.* virtuous action. *So*—similarly.

*Casting largess*—scattering a liberal supply of.

*Definitions, Divisions, and Distinctions*—important terms of mediaeval logic. The whole passage is ironical.

*Generalities...specialities*—the genius and species (of virtue). Sidney continues in the ironic vein.

*Little world*—microcosm. *But that he, denieth in a great chafe*—refuses, in great anger to admit that...*Accord*—cause to agree.

*Mouse-eaten*—'moth eaten' ; very old.

**Page 66**

*Partiality*—the favourable and biased reports given by historians of their favourite rulers. *Inquitive of*—eager for.

*Testis temporum*—quotation from Cicero's *De Oratore* ; history is "the evidence of time, the light of truth, the life of memory, the directress of life, and messenger of antiquity".

*Disputative virtue*—virtue such as may be revealed through a philosophical discussion ; in other words, 'theoretical', and not 'practical' virtue.

*Dangerless*—*i.e.* peaceful.

*Academy*—the garden near Athens where Plato taught named after an Athenian leader, 'Academus'.

*Marathon*—the place where the Athenians defeated the Persian invaders in 490 B.C.

*Phasralia*—Pharasal, ancient city of Greece, near which Caesar defeated Pompey in 48 B.C.

*Poitiers*—the city in France where, in 1356, John II. King of France, was defeated and captured by Edward, the Black Prince.

*Agincourt*—a village of France, where the English King Henry V routed the French in 1415.

*Old-aged experience*—experience of old people.

*I put the learner's hand to the lute*—I (the historian) persuade the learner actually to perform acts of virtue, only the theoretical knowledge of which is given by the philosopher.

*The light*—since the historian offers brilliant examples of virtuous action.

*Conferring story by story*—bringing together stories after stories.

*Brutus*—One of the conspirators who murdered Julius Caesar. See Shakespeare's play *Julius Caesar*.

*Alaphonsus*—Alphonsus V (1416-1458), scholar well-known for his wisdom his patronage of learned men. He was an admirer of Livy's histories.

*Their disputation*—that of the philosopher and the historian.

*Maketh a point*—comes to a stop ; ends.

*Standeth for*—is concerned with. *Moderator*—arbitrator.

*The title*—of "the highest form of learning". *Carry*—win.

*Divine*—*i.e.* divine knowledge ; theology.

*Jus*—Latin *jus* means '*law*', whence the English word 'justice' is derived.

*Formidine poenae*—from fear of punishment. *Virtutis amoe*—from love of virtue. These Latin phrases are taken from Horace.

*Him*—the lawyer.

*These*—The poet, the historian, and the philosopher.

*Naughtiness*—moral badness ; wickedness.

*Manners*—moral character. *Halt*—are retarded.

### Page 67

*Misty to be conceived*—difficult to understand.

*Wade in him*—go through the difficult task of studying his books.

*Exquisitely*—with special care. *Architecture*—architect.

*Judicial*—judicious. *Memory*—without the visualising help of imagery, it is difficult to retain arguments in the memory.

*Tully*—Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 B.C.), celebrated Roman orator and master of Latin prose.

*Anchises*—the father of Aeneas, the well known Greek hero of Trojan war.

*Ulysses*—when Ulysses reached Calypso's island, she received him lovingly and wanted him to stay with her, which he refused to do out of his love for his wife and his island *Ithaca.*

*The Stoics*—a school of philosophy. The Stoics advocated the control of all passions, including anger.

*Short madness*—Horace writes, "anger is a short madness".

*Sophocles*—tragic dramatist of Greece (495-406 B.C.). He wrote a play on Ajax, a renowned Greek hero. Ajax was mad with rage because he was not awarded Achilles' arms after his death.

*Schoolmen*—Christian philosophers of the Middle Ages.

*His*—of angers.

*Genus and difference*—'genus' is the class to which any species belongs ; 'difference' is the feature which distinguishes one species from another.

*Ulysses……Diomedes……Achilles*—famous Greek heroes of the Trojan war. The wisdom and temperance of Ulysses are seen in his adventures in the land of the lotos-eaters. The temperance of Diomedes is shown by the fact that he did not reciprocate the love of Callirhoe, who saved his life. Achilles, the hero of Homer's *Iliad,* is well known for his valour.

*Nisus and Eurylus*—Their friendship and death is described in Virgil's *Aeneid.*

*Apparent shining*—evidently brilliant.

*Oedipus*—on finding that he had slain his father and married his own mother, King Oedipus tore out his eyes. This is the theme of the tragic dramas of Sophocles and Seneca.

*Agamemnon*—he showed his pride by taking Briseis from Achilles. Later he repented of his pride and gave her back to Achilles in order to pacify him, when he refused to fight against Troy. The episode is narrated in Homer's *Iliad*.

*Atreus*—he served his brother Thyestes' two sons at a banquet in honour of Thyestes. Later, he was killed by the third son of Thyestes. *The two Thelian brother*—Etcocles and Polymices.

*Medea*—Princess of Colchis. She helped Jason to win the Golden Fleece but was subsequently deserted by him. Medea revenged herself by killing her two children and destroying Glauce, Jason's new love, by a poisoned garment.

*Terentian Gnatho*—a parasite in *Eunuchous* of Terence, the Roman comic poet. The name 'Gnatho' later became proverbial for "a parasite". 'A parasite' is one who himself does nothing, but lives on the earnings of others.

*Pandar*—the go-between in Chaucer' *Troylus and Cryseyde*. The name has become proverbial for a go-between.

**Page 68**

*To see through them*—to have an insight into them.

*More's Utopia*—Sir Thomas More (1478-1535), was an English statesman and scholar. His *Utopia* set the fashion of writing *Utopias*.

*Mediocribus......Horace*—In *Arts Poetica*, Horace writes ; "Neither men nor gods nor booksellers condone mediocrity in poets."

*Dives and Lazarus*—the rich glutton and the beggar suffering from leprosy in Christ's parable (Luke, XVI).

*The lost child*—the story of the Prodigal Son in *The Bible* (Luke, XV).

*Abraham's bosom*—heaven, considered as the reward of the virtuous.

*Divines*—theologians. *Acts*—records. *Parables*—stories to teach moral lessons.

*Formal*—only in external form.

**Page 69**

*Imposed names*—names given to fictitious characters.

*Alcibiades*—Athenian statesman.

*Vespasian*—T.F.S. Vespasians, Emperor of Rome from 70 to 79 A.D.

*Doctrinable*—instructive.

*Justin*—well known Roman historian.

*Dares Phrygius*—the latin work *De Excidio Trojae* is supposed to be a translation of an eye-witness account by Dares Phrygius of the destruction of Troy.

*Fashion her countenance to the best grace*—have her face painted with the most becoming features.

*Canidia*—the witch in Horace. *Epodes V.* and *Satires I. vii.*

*Tantalus*—'Atreus' grandfather, who, among other things, served upon his son at a banquet of the gods in order to try their omni-science. He was punished in Hades. He could neither drink nor eat, although he was standing up to his chin in water and apples grew before his mouth.

*Cannot......of*—is not at liberty (unless he resorts to poetic devices to give.

*Alexander*—Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.).

*Scipio*—Scipio Africanus (237-183 B.C.) ; the conqueror of Hannibal, leader of the Carthaginians. His exploits are narrated by Livy.

*Quintus Curtius*—he (1st century A.D.) wrote a history of Alexander the Great.

*In universal consideration of doctrines*—as regards lessons of general application.

*Doth warrant......follow*—is a better guarantee for that which a man must follow.

*It hath.........gross conceit*—such arguments appeal to a dull imagination.

*But if he......most reasonable*—but if one realizes that the historian's example offers only a conjecture as to what is likely to happen, and if one is guided by reason, one has to admit that the poet is superior to the historian because the poet formulates his examples in accordance with reason.

*Poetically*—imaginatively.

**Page 70**

*Darius*—Darius I, King of Persia (521-485 B.C.).

*Tarquinius*—Tarquinius Superbus and his son Sextus.

*Abradates*—the story is actually told by Xenophon about Araspes, king of the Medes. Sidney is a little confused here.

*Subject to the poet*—the poet can always improve upon historical facts.

*List*—like, desire. *Which*—with reference to which.

*Success*—result.

*Ulysses in a storm*—the story is narrated in *Odyssey, Book V.*

*The tragedy writer answered*—Euripides, in connexion with his character, Ixion.

*Militiades*—the Athenian general and victor of the battle of Marathon.

*Phocion*—a virtuous Athenian statesman who was put to death in 319 B.C. The Greek philosopher, *Socrates*, one of the wisest men of all times, was made to drink poison in 399 B.C.

*The cruel Severus*—Septimus Severus (A.D. 146—211), Roman Emperor, who reigned for eighteen years.

*The excellent Severus*—Alexander Severus, Roman Emperor, (A.D. 222-35) was slain by his own soldiers.

*Sylla and Marius*—The Roman dictator, Sylla (138-78 B.C.), and his enemy Marius (157-86 B.C.), were notorious for their cruelty, but they lived long.

*Pompey*—Roman general and a member of the first *Triumvirate* was killed in 48 B.C. and *Cicero*, Roman statesman, orator and writer, was killed in 43 B.C., while trying to escape from Rome.

*Cato*—Cato, the Younger (95-46 B.C.), who committed suicide after he failed to defeat Caeser.

*Rabel Caesar*—'rebel' because he abolished the Roman Republic and made himself a dictator.

*His names*—'Caesar' has become a synonym for 'Emperor'.

*Put down*—give up.

*Literas nescivit*—was ignorant of letters (therefore did not know how to be a dictator).

*To do well*—not to be a dictator or tyrant.

*By poetry*—of poetry.

*Occidendos esse*—'that they (tyrants) are to be slain'.

*Cypselus and his son Periander*—tyrants of Corinth (655-625 B.C. and 625-585 B.C.) ; the son was more cruel than the father.

*Phalaris*—Sicilian ruler, 570—554 B.C., who used to burn his victims alive.

*Dionysius*—Dionysius, the Elder, tyrant of Syracuse, 405—367 B.C.

*Kennel*—pack of hounds here used contemptuously for family.

**Page 71**

*He*—that is, poetry. *Setting it forward*—inciting it to.

*Philosophilosophos*—lover of philosophers.

*In moving*—in the power of moving.

*Gnosis*—knowledge. *Praxis*—action. *Painfulness*—taking of pains.

*Words of art*—technical terms of philosophy. *Natural conceit*—instinctive knowledge.

*Hoc opus*—This is toil, this is labour (*Aeneid*)

*Human*—as distinguished from divine science or theology.

*Pretending no more*—pretending merely to tell an interesting tale.

**Page 72**

*Aloes or rhubarb*—bitter purgatives.

*Hercules*—a popular Greek hero.

*They be......again*—were again being treated as school boys.

*Whereof poetry is*—to which poetry belongs. *Conveniency*—propriety.

*Amadis de Gaule*—the hero of a famous Spanish romance.

*Carrying old Anchises*—the episode is described in Virgil's *Aeneid.*

*Words of Turnus*—though a brave warrior, Turnus, King of the Tutuli, was ultimately slain by Aeneas.

*Fugientem haec......etc.*—"shall this land see (Turnus) a fugitive ? Is it, after all, so pitiful a thing to die ? (*Aeneid*, *XII*).

*Saving wrangling*—confining themselves to empty discussion.

*Boethius*—a well-known Roman philosopher and author of a famous philosophical treatise in Latin (C. 475-525). *De Cynsolatione philosophiae* ("the consolation of philosophy'). It was written in prison and was translated into English by Chaucer, and several others.

*A school-name*—a mere abstraction, taught in schools.

*Indulgere genio*—to follow (their own) inclinations.

*The inward reason*—'the light of Nature'.

*Good-fellow*—a boon companion, an intimate friend.

*Which seen...love*—to see it is to love it.

*Menenius Agrippa*—Roman dictator (503 B.C.).

*If they were Platonic*—Plato attached great importance to Geometry. Over the door of his Academy were inscribed the following words : "Let no one enter who is untaught in geometry."

**Page 73**

*Nathan, the prophet*—the story is told in *the Bible*.

*Tenderest office*—act of kindness in making David realise his sin.

*Ungratefully*—cruelly.

*The second...cause*—God is the First Cause. Nathan's story is the instrument used by God, and so it is the second cause.

*Psalm of Mercy*—Psalm li. *Familiar*—suitable.

*The most excellent work*—*i.e.* promotion of virtue. *Him*—poetry.

*Although...authority*—what is produced is of the utmost importance in judging whether a thing is praise-worthy or blameworthy.

*Sannazzaro*—Italian author (1458—1530) of a pastoral romance *Arcadia* (1504), which had a great influence of European literature and on which Sidney's romance *Arcadia* (1590) is modelled.

*Cometh...one*—makes no difference.

*The pastoral poem*—Poetry dealing with the lives and loves of shepherds and farmers.

*The poor pipe*—the shepherd's oaten pipe, celebrated in pastoral poetry.

*Meliboeus...Tityrus*—farmers in Virgil's First *Eclogue* : the former stands for the farmers whose plots of land have been seized by the king, while the latter stands for Virgil, whose land has been restored to him.

**Page 74**

*Alexander*—the king of Macedon (356—323 B.C.).

*Darius*—king of Persia (336—331 B.C.). *The cock of this dunghill*—Sidney refers to the war between Greece and Persia, in which Greece won. *The Cock*—the master of

*Haec memini...etc.*—In Virgil. *Eclogues, VII.* "These things I remember and that Thyrsis strove in vain and was vanquished. Henceforth it is Corydon. Corydon is (the only poet) for us". The glory of greatness is short-lived.

*Heraclitus*—(sixth century B.C.) known as "the weeping philosopher", because of his melancholy philosophy.

*Painting out*—portraying. *How weak*—because they reveal the weakness of man.

*Iambic*—satirical poetry in which the exposure of human folly and wickedness is direct ; in the true *Satiric*, the poet uses the indirect method and employs the devices of irony, allegory, etc.

*Omne vafer, etc.*—Said by Persius of the great satirist Horace, and condensed by Sidney from the original ; 'While his friend laughs, sly (Quintus Horatius) Flacus touches up his every fault, and, once admitted, can play with his very vitals.'

*Fst Ulubris*—the last lines of Horace, *Epistles LXI*, adapted : "...We seek to make life happy. What you are seeking is here, it is at Ulubrae, if there fail you not a mind well balanced." *Ulubrae* was an almost proverbially uninspiring town surrounded by marshes.

*Rubs the galled mind*—such metaphors come naturally to a lover of horses like Sidney.

*Circum praecordia ludit*—plays round (our heart).

*Passionate life*—the life of a man who is "passion's slave."

*The comic*—comedy, which had degenerated into a licentious from a farcial entertainment, was ridiculed by the Puritans. Sidney defends true comedy on moral grounds. It mercilessly strips the mask off hypocicy and affectation. So it makes man moral.

*Comedy is an imitation*—Sidney's debt to Aristotle is obvious.

*A great foil*—the ugliness of evil, by contrast, sets off the loveliness of virtue.

*Demea*—a mean old father in Terence's *Adelphi.*

*Davus*—an intriguing slave in Terence *Andria and Phormio.*

*Gnatho and Thraso*—boastful soldiers in Terence's *Eunuchus.*

*Who be such*—their real nature is such.

*Signifying badge*—some distinguishing characteristic or 'humour'.

**Page 75**

*Pistrinum*—the pounding-mill, where slaves and criminals were sent to work as a punishment in ancient times.

*Sock...faults*—Aesop's fable of the two wallets that man carry —one of which, full of our own faults, is placed at our back, seen by others, though not by us.

*Tragedy*—together with the epic, both being great in scope and manner, tragedy was subjected to endless theoretical discussions throughout the Renaissance and after. Sidney's only, but important, departure from the main 'Aristotelian' line of argument is in calling the 'affects' (emotions) stirred by tragedy 'admiration' (great wonder and reverence) and 'commiseration' instead of 'pity and fear'.

*Effects*—feelings, emotions.

*Qui Sceptra*—"The cruel tyrant who wields his sceptre with harsh rules, he fears those who fear him, and terror recoils upon its author."

*Alexander Pheraeous*—Alexander, the cruel tyrant of Pherae, wept at the sufferings of Hecuba and Andromache during a performance of Euripides' *Troades.*

*Natural problems*—questions dealing with our earthly life.

*The old songs, etc.*—the ballad of *Chevy Chase.*

*Barbarousness*—Sidney is apologetic because ballads were not properly appreciated in his day. Sidney's admiration for *Chevy Chase reveals the romantic in him.*

*Crowder*—fiddler ; bard.

*With no rougher voice*—with language no less refined than his own voice.

*Pindar*—the great Greek lyric poet (520-440 B.C.) well-known for his *Odes.*

*Hungary*—Sidney spent about a month in Hungary in the summer of 1573, which was then largely occupied by the Turks.

*Lacedaemonians*—Spartans. *Toys*—trifles. *Olympus*—Olympia, ancient Greek city. Sidney has wrongly used "Olympus" for it.

**Page 76**

*Three fearful felicities*—the other two are ; the news of a victory against the Illyrians and the announcement of the birth of his son, Alexander. All the three felicities were reported to Philip on the same day.

*That kind*—lyric poetry.

*Rests*—remains to be considered.

*The heroical*—epic poetry, considered to be the greatest form of poetry by Aristotle, and the critics of the Renaissance.

*Turnus*—the Italian prince killed by Aeneas.

*Tydeus*—one of the seven heroes who fought against Thebes.

*Rinaldo*—the hero in Tasso's *Gerusalemme.*

*Plato and Tully*—Plato in *Phaedrus*, Tully in *De Offlcus*.

*Ceremonies*—sacred objects.

*Dido*—queen of Carthage who killed herself when Aeneas, at the commands of the Gods, abandoned her.

*Gratefulness*—Dido was hospitable and kind to him when he was wrecked on the shore of Carthage, and was in difficulty.

*Melius Chrysippo*—"better than Chrysippus and Crantor." Sidney here applies to Virgil, what Horace says of Homer. Chrysippus and Crantor were both ancient philosophers.

*His*—its (poetry). *Him*—it (poetry).

*The sum that contains him*—poetry as a whole.

**Page 77**

*Misomousoi*—coined by Sidney on the analogy of misanthrope or misogynist ; poet-haters.

*Spleen*—supposed to be the seat of laughter by the Elizabethans. *Playing wit*—a scoffer ; one who makes fun of others.

*Discretion of an ass, etc*—the wisdom of an ass.

*Commodity*—advantage. *Turn*—chang e.

*Ovid's verse*—The actual line in Ovid is "Et latest vitium proximitate boni" which means "And let each fault lie hidden under the semblance of something good".

*Agrippa*—a German scholar (1486—1533), author of *On the Vanity of Arts and Sciences*.

*Erasmas*—the famous Renaissance Dutch scholar, author of the ironical work, *The Praise of Folly*.

*Another foundation*—*i.e.* irony.

*Pleasant*—witty. *Versing*—writing in metrical form.

**Page 78**

*Scaliger*—J.C. Scaliger, Italian critic (1484—1558). His *Poetics* (1561) exercised great influence on Renaissance criticism. Scaliger says that the 'poet' is 'a maker of verse'.

*Oratio next to ratio*—qualities which distinguish man from animal. *Oratio*—power of speaking. *Ratio*—power of reasoning.

*His forcible quality*—its persuasive nature.

*Without*—unless.

*Music*—In the sixteenth century the reasons why (and the ways in which) music had an irresistible effect upon its hearers were subjected to much learned speculation and analysis. In the present context music is important since it aids the poet in 'moving' his listeners.

*Accusing itself*—betraying itself.

*The art of memory*—the art of remembering facts or arguments, commonly by forming images of each fact or part of argument in association with a 'locality', for instance in a 'room', 'well and thoroughly known'. These localities—'natural seats'—have much in common with *the loci* ('places' or 'topics') or logic and rhetoric.

*Percontatorem*—"Avoid an inquisitive man ; he is sure to be a prattler."

*Dum sibi...etc.*—"While each one is pleasing himself, we are a credulous lot."

*Nurse of abuse*—here, as in many other passages in *the Apology*, Sidney has Gosson's *School of Abuse* in mind.

*Field to ear*—opportunity.

**Page 79**

*Overshot Robin Hood*—an allusion to the proverb "Many a man speaketh of Robin Hood that never shot in his bow". It means to talk about matters of which one is ignorant.

*Plato banished them*—at one place Plato says that poets have no place in his ideal Commonwealth, and so asks them to go away.

*Peteres principium*—beg the question (to begin by assuming that which is yet to be proved).

*First assumption*—that there are more fruitful branches of knowledge.

*Liars*—because the poets deal with fiction, they were supposed to tell lies.

*Though he would*—the poet cannot lie, even if he wants to do so.

*Charon*—"the ferryman of the underworld" ; the boatman who takes the souls of the dead across the river *Leth* which separates this world from the other.

*Maketh any circles*—casts a spell upon, as witches do by drawing circles.

*Even for his entry*—the introductory lines of an epic in which the Muses are invoked. *Without*—unless.

*Give the lie to*—accuse of falsehood.

**Page 80**

*Argueth*—proves.

*John of the stile, etc.*—these names are used by lawyers for the two parties to a case (by way of illustration).

*Estates*—status.

*The philosophers*—Plato, for example, in his *Symposium.*

*Eikastike*—the art of making likenesses. *Phantastike*—the art of making appearances or phantasies. The distinction between the two was made by Plato and others.

*Judith killing*—as narrated in *the Book of Judith* in *the Apocrypha.*

*Abraham...David fighting with Goliath*—reference is to various Biblical stories.

*Ill-pleased eye*—the eye that is pleased by evil things.

*Abuse...abused*—the misuse of poetry should not be regarded as a fault or defect of poetry itself.

**Page 81**

*Receiveth his title*—is entitled to approval or condemnation.

*Rampire*—rampart ; fortification.

*Sphinx*—the legendary bird, which is supposed to have asked riddles and answered them

*Albion*—ancient name for Great Britain.

*Chain-shot*—two cannon-balls chained together.

*Certain Goths*—The story of how the Goths reached Rome is found in the account of the mediaeval historian Dio Cassius.

*Jubeo stultum...*—adopted from Horace; "I give him free leave to be foolish".

*Quality*—the problem of. *Ens*—existence.

*Prima materia*—the original substance out of which the universe was formed.

**Page 82**

*Notions*—impulses. *Phonenix*—the paragon of ; the best of.

*Took dead Homer*—Alexander carried *the Illiad* of Homer with him.

*Callisthenes*—pupil and relation of Aristotle. He accompanied Alexander to Asia.

*Cato...Fulvius ..Ennius*—The poet Ennius went with the consul Fulvius to Aetolia. Cato the elder, known as the Censor, because of his severity, did not approve of this and was displeased with Fulvius.

*Cato Uticensis*—great-grandson of Cato, the Censor.

*The former*—Cato, the Censor.

*Pluto*—the god of the lower world.

*Unmustered*—not officially enrolled in the army.

*Scipio Nasica*—Cornelius Scipio Nasica, who, judged to be the best citizen of Rome, was chosen by the Senate to fulfil certain commandments of the oracle in 204 B.C.

*The other Scipio brothers*—the one surnamed Africanus for his victory over Hannibal in 202 B.C., the other Asiaticus for his victory over Antiochus in 190 B.C., both were patrons of Ennius.

*Plato's name*—Sidney now deals with the notorious accusations against poetry in Plato, *Republic, books ii and x.*

**Page 83**

*Had their lives saved*—the story is narrated in Plutarch's *Life of Nicias.*

*Unworthy to live*—Socrates, for instance, was condemned to death.

*Hiero the First*—the tyrant ruler of Syracuse (478—467 B.C.).

*Plato...Dionysius*—it is said that Plato was sold as a slave by Dionysius, tyrant ruler of Syracuse (405—367 B.C.).

*Do thus*—argue in this unfair fashion.

*Cavilltions*—seemingly clever repartees or retorts.

*As likewise one should do*—By using such unfair arguments Sidney is only trying to pay back the philosopher in his own coin.

*Community*—holding in common, see *Republic V.*

*Stretched to*—extended to. Poetry should be honoured as well, provided it is noble and good.

*Twice two poets*—St. Paul uses two quotations from two poets, from each poet once.

*Setteth...philosophy*—gives a warning against philosophy. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy..."

*Induce*—introduce.

*Very*—true. *Stood upon*—dealt with.

*Plutarch*—in his *Morals*.

*Qua authoriate*—"And this authority certain uncouth and barbarous writers seek to misuse for the purpose of driving poets out of the republic."

*Law*—indulgence, a sporting term, meaning, the time allowed to an animal that is to be hunted.

*Ion*—a work of Plato.

*Under whose lion's skin*—Sidney alludes to the fable of the ass who, in order to appear like a lion, put on the lion's skin, but was betrayed by his braying.

**Page 84**

*More than myself do*—Sidney does not believe that some sort of divine inspiration is the only source of poetic genius.

*Laelius*—friend of the Scipios.

*Heautontimoroumenes*—'Self-tormentor' the name of comedy of Terence.

*Apollo*—He was supposed to speak through the Delphic Oracle.

*Guards*—ornaments. There are many quotations from the poets in the writings of Plutarch.

*Musa, mihi*—"O Muse, tell me the causes, what deity was offended."

*Adrian*—a famous Roman emperor who wrote some poetry.

*Sophocles*—great Greek tragic poet (496—406 B.C.) who was appointed one of the ten generals in the war against Samos.

*Germanicus*—nephew of Emperor Tiberius. He fought successfully against the Germans, and was the author of several poems.

*Robert, King of Sicily*—Robert II of Anjou, a friend of Petrarch and a patron to Boccaccio, was himself a poet.

*King Francis*—King of France (1515—47), was a great patron of poets and artists.

*King James*—James I of Scotland (1394—1437) also the poet of *The King's Quair*.

*Bembus*—Cardinal Bembo, well known for his Latin poetry.

*Bibbiena*—Cardinal Bernard, humanist and author of one comedy.

**Page 85**

*Beza*—French Biblical scholar. He also wrote poetry in Latin.

*Melancthon*—the German scholar, reformer and friend of Luther. His poems are praised by Scaliger.

*Fracastorius*—a scientist, philosopher and poet.

*Muretus*—M.A. Muret, Freneh scholar and poet.

*Buchanan*—Scot poet and scholar who studied and taught in France.

*Hospital*—Michel de La'Hospital, Chancellor of France, a wise and generous statesman, author of a number of poems in Latin.

*Mars*—the God of war.

*Over-faint quietness*—the references is to a quarter of a century of perfect peace under Elizabeth I. *To strew the house to*—cover the floor with rushes, in welcome of.

*Mountebanks*—quacks. Those of Venice were notorious.

*Venus*—according to classical mythology, Venus, the goddess of love, deserted her lame husband Vulcan in favour of the valiant Mars. She was caught in a net with Vulcan.

*Idle England*—England at peace, with no war-activity.

*Epaminondas*—a Theban general. Plutarch says that he gave dignity to the office of Chief Scavenger.

*Post*—hasten.

*Helicon*—a mountain in Greece sacred to the Muses or the nine goddesses of learning.

*Post-Helicon*—write poetry.

*Queis meliore*—adapted from Juvenal ; ‘ ‘Whose hearts the Titan (Prometheus) has moulded of a nobler clay’’.

*Pallas*—Athene, goddess of wisdom, prudence and industry.

*In despite of Pallas, or invita Minerva*—against Minerva's will, without the blessing of the goddess of knowledge.

**Page 86**

*Orator fit...etc*—the orator is made, the poet is born (Cicero).

*Daedalus*—in Greek myth, he made artificial wings for himself and his son Icarus, but Icarus flew, in spite of his father's advice to the contrary, too near to the sun. Icarus's waxen wings melted, and he fell down, headlong.

*But these...withal*—but we do not trouble ourselves with either rules of art or care to imitate suitable models.

*Fore-backwardly*—beginning at the wrong end.

*Quodibet*—“anything that pleases one” ; “whatever you like”.

*Through wrongly...rank*—they seem to think that whatever they write is verse, but it is not actually so, as they never care to order their lines in a regular manner.

*Quickquid etc.*—adapted from Ovid. “Whatever I shall try to write, will turn into verse.”

*Troilus and Criseyde*—a well-known poem of Chaucer.

*Mirror of Magistrates*—“the Mirror for Magistrates” (1559—etc.), a collection of poems by various writers, including Thomas Sackville (1563 ed) on the downfalls of illustrious English statesmen.

*Surry's lyrics*—the poems by Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517—47) printed in *Songs and Sonnets* (*Tottle's Miscellany*, 1557).

*Shepheardes' Calender* (1979)—Spenser's first major publication dedicated to Sidney.

*That same framing*—Sidney does not approve of Spenser's consciously rustic and archaic language in the *Shepherds' Calender* because the three great pastoral authors did not ‘affect’ it ; Theocritus (third century B.C.), writer of *Idylls* ; Virgill in his *Eclogues* ; and Sannazzaro, the Italian poet.

*Tingling*—tinkling.

*Honest civility*—decency.

*Gorboduc*—the tragedy of the warring British princes Ferrex and Porrex, by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton, first acted (before Queen Elizabeth) in 1561, the first English tragedy in blank verse.

*Seneca's style...notable morality*—L.A. Seneca (4 B.C.—A.D. 65). Roman dramatist. His nine tragedies, including, *Medea*, *Oedipus*, *Thyestes*, were intended not for stage performance but for recitation. Rhetorical and declamatory, they are full of discussions of political and moral subjects. They were widely influential in the Renaissance.

*Delightfully teach*—Sidney emphasizes "delightful teaching" as "the very end of poesie".

*Circumstances*—subordinate parts.

**Page 87**

*Aristotle's precept*—Sidney was mistaken with regard to the origin of the three dramatic Unities.

*Common reason*—A number of critics, including *Dr. Johnson*, have pointed out that these Unities are not based on common sense.

*Inartificially*—inartistically ; not in accordance with true art.

*Under-kingdoms*—inferior kingdoms.

*Traverses*—difficulties.

*Players*—playwrights.

*Eunuchus*—Sidney mistakenly uses 'Eunuchus' for *Heautontimoroumenos*, a comedy of Terence.

*Pacolet's*—the enchanted horse of Pacolet (in the French romance *Valentine and Orson*).

*Nuntius*—messenger.

*Ab ovo*—'from the egg', that is, from the very beginning.

*A story*—the story of *the Hecuba* of Euripides.

**Page 88**

*Neither right...comedies*—like most other neo-classical critics, Sidney believes in the rigid separation of tragedy and comedy. He is against tragi-comedy.

*Head and shoulders*—forcibly ; violently.

*Decency*—decorum ; appropriateness.

*Admiration...sportfulness*—neither the aims of tragedy nor those of comedy ; neither they arouse the tragic emotion, nor do they delight.

*Apuleius*—A Latin writer, author of the popular romance, *The Golden Ass*, which is a mixture of comic and serious elements.

*Amphitryo*—Plauses himself called it a *tragi-comedia*.

*Daintily*—rarely.

*Tract*—extent.

*Conveniency*—Similarity.

*Doltishness*—clownage.

*We shall...laughter*—We sometimes laugh at something sad in error, even though we should be sorry for the speaker. Such laughter is a source of pain rather than pleasure.

*For the respect of them*—on their account.

**Page 89**

*Mad antics*—grotesque representations.

*Nil habet*—"Wretched poverty has nothing harder against itself than that it makes men ridiculous." (Juvenal, *Satires*).

*Busy loving*—busy-body : one who interferes in the work of others.

*Wry-transformed*—one who has undergone some grotesque change.

*Naturally*—in real life.

*Energia*—force of expression.

*Bewrayed*—betrayed ; revealed.

**Page 90**

*Coursing of a letter*—alliteration.

*Figures and flowers*—figures of speech and striking phrases used to decorate the language.

*Winter starved*—shrived ; frost-stricken.

*Tully and Demonsthenes*—they are regarded as models of eloquence.

*Nizolian paper-books*—Marius Nizolius (1498-1566) published a collection of words and phrases of Cicero.

*Attentive translation*—careful transference.

*Vivit*—"He lives. Lives, do I say ? In truth he comes even into the Senate."

*Familiar epistle*—letter to a familar person.

*Choler*—a pun on 'colour,' (ornament of style).

*Similiter candences*—phrases which have similar sounds (frequently used by orators). Sidney wholly disapproves of the excessively rhythmic oratory which is popularly known as Ciceronian', but is not actually so.

*Daintiness*—delicacy ; good taste.

*Sophister*—a sophist (one who uses clever but misleading arguments).

*Fineness*—subtlety.

*Similitudes*—similes, often far-fetched, as in the 'Euphuistic' style which uses frequent comparisons with plants, animals, etc. This kind of style was first used in Lyly's prose romance *Euphues*.

*Set by it*—set store by it ; valued it.

*Mark*—purpose. *Knacks*—devices. *Curiously*—exquisitely.

**Page 91**

*Pounded*—condemned.

*Wordish consideration*—consideration regarding the use of words.

*Both the other*—Perhaps Sidney here refers to Saxone and French languages.

*Compositions... together*—compound words.

*Number*—equal number of syllables in each line.

*Accent*—stress.

*Versifying*—In the sixteenth century—in England, especially in the 1570s and 1580s, and earlier in France—the merits of the two ways of versifying, viz., quantitative verse or verse (generally rhymed), according to number of syllables and/or number of accents, were much debated, and Sydney himself composed numerous experiments. Discussions invariably centred upon the presupposed connexion between poetry and music and it was often felt that quantitative verse has the greatest affinity with music because both observe '*time*' (long/short) or duration—(**Oxford**).

**Page 92**

*Clauserus*—Conrad Clauser, who translated into Latin the work of the Greek Stoic Cornutus on the nature of the Gods.

*Quid non*—what not.

*Landino*—Florentine scholar (1424-1504).

*Libertino*—Horace, *Satires*, *I*, "a freedman's son".

*Herculea proles*—"a child of the house of Hercules.

*Si quid mea Vergil, Aeneld, IX 446* ; "If aught my verse can do."

**Page 93**

*Placed*—that is, in Paradise.

*Dull-making*—the loud noise of the waterfalls of the Nile was supposed to produce dullness of the sense of hearing.

*Mome*—dolt, fool. *Momus*—the Greek God of ridicule and so of comedy.

*Midas*—A Phrygian King who was given the ears of an ass because he judged the music of Pan to be superior to that of Apollo.

*Bubonax*—the sculptor Bupalus, who made a very truthful statue of the ugly satirical poet, Hipponax, and so made him an enemy. He was driven to suicide by the letter's satirical verse.

*To be done in Ireland*—the reference is to the supposed practice of killing rats by reciting poetry.

# 10

# *Select Literary Criticism*

### (1)

This development leads Sidney away from the Aristotelian notion of imitation; even though he uses the term "imitation". Later on in his discussion; he is not really concerned to prove that poetry imitates anything—indeed, its glory is that it is the only one of the arts that does not imitate, but creates. He almost proceeds to develop a theory of "ideal imitation", the notion that the poet imitates not the mere appearances of actuality but the hidden reality behind them, but stops short of this to maintain the more naive theory that the poet creates a better world than the one we actually live in. He does not, however, rest content with a mere escapist position. The function of imaginative literature is not to provide us with an escape world in which our imaginations can seek consolation for the difficulties and imperfections of real life. It is true that this view of literature as simple escape is often held, and that the great majority of ordinary readers of popular magazine stories today have some such view of the function of fiction, but for Sidney this would be a far from adequate defence of poesy, and would certainly not meet the Puritan charge. No; for sidney the ideal world of poet is of value because it is both a better world than the real one and it is presented in such a way that the reader is stimulated to try and imitate it in his own practice. Thus the Aristotelian notion of imitation is transferred from the poet to the reader. *The poet does not imitate but creates; it is the reader who imitates what the poet creates.*

This is a most interesting development of the argument. Taking from the Roman poet Horace the view that the poet both delights and teaches, Sidney goes on to show that the poets "indeede, do merely make to imitate, and imitate both to delight and teach, and delight to move men to take that goodness in hande, which without delight they would flye as from a stranger; and teach, to make them know that goodness whereunto they are moved, which being the noblest scope to which ever any learning was directed, yet want there not idle tongues to barke at them." He then proceeds to point out that verse "is but an ornament and no cause to Poetry" and "it is not riming and versing that maketh a Poet, no more than a long gowne maketh an Advocate. . . . But it is that fayning notable images of virtues, vices, or what else, with that delightful teaching which must be the right describing note to know a Poet by; although, indeed, the Senate of Poets hath chosen verse as their fittest rayment, meaning, as in matter it passed all in all, so in manner it goes beyond them; not speaking (table talke fashion or like men in a dream) words as they chanceably fall from the mouth, but peyzing (weighing) each sillable of each words by just proportion, according to the dignitie of the subject."

The poet, then, teaches by presenting an ideal world for the imitation of the reader. But if the poet's world is, as he had earlier maintained, a perfect world, where all rivers are pleasant, all trees fruitful, all lovers faithful and all friends constant, how can the poet's activity be described as "faying notable images of virtues, vices, or what else ?" Should not they all be virtues ? The answer to this is that when Sidney asked earlier where such perfect lovers, friends, princes and heroes as one finds in the works of the poets were to be found in real life, he did not really mean that all characters in fiction were ideal; he meant that when they were good they acted in accordance with the full perfection of that kind of goodness, and when they were bad their badness was equally unmixed, obviously ugly, and inevitably leading toappropriate punishment. The perfection of the poet's world, it emerges later in Sidney's argument, does not consist in its being peopled with wholly virtuous characters, but in its heroes always being perfect in behaviour and successful in fortune and its villains always thoroughly and obviously villainous and doomed to a certain bad end. In the poet's world the righteous always prosper and the wicked are never left unpunished. It is from this conception that we get the term "poetic justice."

*—David Daiches*

(2)

"*The Defence of Poesie* by Sir Philip Sidney is both the English locus of closest contact with Italian criticism and a brilliant epitome of what was best in the spirit of that criticism. The utilitarian defence of poetry by an Englishman appears quite early in the century with Sir Thomas Elyot's *Boke of the Governour*, 1530, in which chapters X and XII of *Book I* (the education of a public servant described by a public servant) maintain that Homer and Virgil can teach the young men not only moral lessons but arms, politics and horse-breeding. (The Pre-Platonic directness of this apology—as if the rhapsode *Ion* were speaking—was perhaps possible only because it came before the great vogue of Aristotle's *Poetics*). A less pragmatic idea about the civilizing value of literature was one of the basic premises of Renaissance humanism and of the Renaissance theory of education—in the *Adagia* of Erasmus, for instance, or the treatises of Ludovicus Vives. Throughout Italian criticism of the century (in Trissino, Minturno, Cinthio, Mazzoni, for instance, and in almost all other writers) the accepted formula is morally didactic, the Horatio—Aristotelian instruction and pleasure, with countless inconvulsive variations on the relation between the two. (Castelvetro, with a practical concern for the recreation of common spectator, was one of the earliest to make an emphatic disavowal of the didactic view—a disavowal that would gain ground with French 17th century critics). At the same time the Platonic charge of immorality might readily enough be brought against poetry—especially when English moralists (for example, Roger Aschem in his *Schoolmaster* associated poetry with Italiante license in manners or dress, or when Puritan writers turned their attention to the theatre. One of the most pungent of the latter—and today one of the best known of all those who engaged in the long pamphlet war that began in England shortly after the start of the London professional theatre in 1571—was Stephen Gosson. The gist of his rattling, tart, Euphuistic double protest against the moral influence of plays themselves and of the deplorable bordello company which flocked to the theatre, may be told almost sufficiently in the garrulous title of his *School of Abuse* : *Containing a pleasant invective against Poets, Pipers, Players, Jesters, aud such like Caterpillars of a Commonwealth* : *Setting up the Flag of Defiance to their mischievous exercise, and overthrowing their Bulwarks, by Prophane Writers, Natural Reason, and common experience* ; *A Discourse as Pleasant for them that favour learning, as profitable for all that will follow virtue*.

This pamphlet appeared in 1579, with a dedication "To the right noble Gentlemen, Master Philip Sidney, Esquire." It was a moment when Sidney, returned from his educational travels in Switzerland and Italy, standing loosely attached to Elizabeth's court under the patronage of Leicester, and in companionable relation to Spenser and other gentlemen of like spirit, was engaged in the literary occupations, his sonnets to Stella and his romance *Arcadia*, by which in the short time that remained before his death at Zutphen, he became the brilliant symbol of the courtly literary spirit of England. Largely from Gosson's dedication and from an allusion to this by Spenser in a letter dated from Leicester House to the Cambridge scholar Gabriel Harvey, but in part also from certain moments in Sidney's argument and certain snatches of parodied Euphuistic style which seem echoes of Gosson, Sidney's *Defence of Poesie*, though written perhaps as late as 1585, has been traditionally considered a retort to Gosson. It circulated in manuscript among the *literati* during Sidney's life and was soon quoted in the best critical places—in Puttenham's *Arte* of 1589 in Harington's *Apologie* of 1598.

The points of interest in the essay include a preliminary double definition of poetry, from Aristotle and from Horace, a now famous statement that the poet's tale holds children from play and old men

SRINAGAR-190003 KASHMIR

from the chimney-corner, an adaptation of Aristotelian doctrine making poetry a union of philosophy and history and giving it the highest literary palm after the Scriputres, an invocation of Plato as a witness for poetry (following so reputable an authority as Scaliger, Sidney overrates the Socratic concessions to poetic frenzy in the *Ion*), and a section where Sidney applies Scaligerian and Horatian norms to English poetry. He protests against the slack unity of Academic tragedies (excepting *Gorboduc*) and the clatter of wooden swords in battle endings. He mentions Spenser's *Shepheard's Calendar* with respect, admits the stirring of his heart at the old ballad of *Chevy Chase*, and looks back with wistful respect and wonder at Chaucer—"that he in that mistry time could see so clearly." We may look on these latter details of Sidney's *Defence* as constituting an early landmark in the progress of English literary self consciousness and literary history—a topic to which we shall have occasion to return in later chapters.

To look a little more closely at the theoretic content of Sidney's moral defence of poetry : one should note in the first place that the second of Sidney's preliminary definitions is such as to make the moral content of poetry (that is, vices and virtues correctly evaluated) a part of its essential requirement—as indeed his first definition names the purpose of poetry explicitly as teaching.

Yet in the second place, at a much later point in the essay, when he is facing Platonic objections and is hence forced into reasoning about the moral requirement and how to reconcile it with the stark fact that much fine poetry is immoral, Sidney says something different : The phenomenon of immoral poetry (amorous conceits, lust, vanity, scurrility in poetry) means not that poetry abuseth man's wit, "but that man's wit abuseth poetry." He could have said (though to say so would have contradicted easily observable facts, and he did not say it) that immoral poetry was, by his earlier definition, no poetry at all. He preferred to raise the question how poetry, which is defined as something moral, can be in fact either moral or immoral. His answer—in terms of the ideal conceived as what is most real—should not be dismissed too lightly, though it perhaps gives mere logic some difficulty, "Nay, truly, though I yield that poesy may not only be abused, but that by being abused, by the reason of his sweet charming force, it can do more hurt than any other army of words, yet shall it be so far from concluding that the abuse should give reproach to the abused, that contrariwise it is a good reason, that whatsoever, being abused, doth most harm, being rightly used—and upon the right use each thing receiveth his title—doth most good."

Many volumes of subsequent debate have perhaps not adjusted this delicate conflict of values any more satisfactorily. One might summarize the problem by saying that Sidney, like most those who have maintained that poetry is (and ought to be) moral, has not been able to resolve an ambiguity of the word 'ought' as used in the formula. Is this a poetic 'ought' or is it in fact only a moral 'ought' ? In the second sense 'ought' to be moral is a tautology—since moral is what all our works ought to be. Is the thesis about the morality of poetry a truism in the realm of morals, or does it lie actually in the realm of poetics ? Does it actually relate to the poet's craft ?

But it is when we back off from the too explicit question about morals posed by the uncomfortable Gosson and allow ourselves to hear Sidney echoing some of those safer, because more generalised Renaissance doctrines of ideality to which we have lately referred, that we have the Sidney who is dearest to the English literary tradition. In late antiquity, we remember, there had appeared the Platonian doctrine of the poet's intimate access to the transcendent forms, and the example of the divinely conceived Phidian Zeus which Plotinus shared with the Vitta Appolloni of Philostratus. These approaches to a theory of creative imagination have their notable counterparts in Renaissance English. There is, for example, that passage in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* where then "poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,......the poet's pen... gives to airy nothing. A local habitation and a name." There is that in Bacon's *Proficience* and *Advancement of Learning* where, "reason doth buckle and bowe the mind unto the Nature of things," poetry "doth raise and erect the Minde, by submitting the shows of things to the desires of the mind." "Therefore it was ever thought to have some participation of divinsesse." And Sidney himself contributes two of the brightest in our florilegium of such sententiae : the brief refutation of a stock charge, "......the poet..... nothing affirmeth, and therefore never lieth," and metaphor of the zodiac's range and fire, which framed in its needed context, we present as the tailpiece and conclusion of our procession from antiquity to the earliest flourishing of English critical self-consciousness. There is no art delivered unto mankind that hath not the works of nature for his principal object......Only the poet, disdaining to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, doth grow, in effect, into another nature, in making things either better than nature bringeth forth or, quite a new, form such never were in nature, as the heroes, demi-gods, cyclops, chimeras, furies, and such like ; so as he goeth [hand in hand with nature, not enclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely ranging within the zodiac of his own wit. "Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry as divers poets have done ; neither with pleasant rivers, fruithful trees, sweet smelling flowers, nor whatsoever else may make the too-much-loved earth more lovely ; her world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden."

—*Wimsatt and Brookes*

(3)

"When in 1595 the third and last of Sidney's principal works, the *Apologie for Poetrie*, was published only his treatment of the drama was out of date. In everything else he stated what was by now, thanks to him, the accepted critical position. Long known in manuscript, though not to so wide an audience as had read with delight the *Arcadia* and *Astrophel and Stella*, his essay was less an influence itself than a record of those influences which had shaped the New Poetry of England. Here he summed up the whole Renaissance tradition of criticism, more concisely, more persuasively. with a more urbane elegance than any similar work in any language. Reading it we can understand how the astonishing development of English literature, in those twelve or fifteen years that had passed since Sidney returned from his empassege to the Imperial Court, had been brought about.

Sidney himself was concerned in his *Apologie* rather to defend poetry generally against the attacks of the Puritans than to claim any notable achievement by English poets ; to assert that such achievement was desirable, not to announce its existence. Among the poets who have already written his selection is cursory. To Chaucer, like all Elizabethans, he gives the pre-eminence, and (as was usual at that time) he preferred *Troilus and Criseyde* to all the other poems. "Truly, I know not whether to mervalle more, either that he in that mistie time could see so clearely, or that we in this cleare age walke so stumbilingly after him". Of more recent poetry he refers to the *Mirror for Magistrates* and the poems of the Earl of Surrey. He makes no mention of Wyatt, perhaps, because like Puttenham, he found very little difference between him and Surrey. Of poems by living writers he mentions only the *Shepherd's Calender*, to which he gives qualified approval."

—*John Buxton*

**(4)**

"Of greater importance, howeve, is his work as a constructive critic, seen in scattered remarks which contribute to a better understanding and appreciation of literary values. A just appraisal of contemporary literature is notoriously chancy ; but Sidney's selection of that *Mirror for Magistrate*, Surrey's lyrics, *Gorboduc* and the *Shepherd's Calendar* as worthy of praise, gives evidence of discrimination, which is by no means invalidated by the reservations he makes, namely, that the plot of *Gorboduc* was somewhat faulty and unconvincing or again, that no precedent existed in the practice of the ancients for Spenser's use of dialect and archaic forms. Apart from this he calls attention to literary excellences of more than one kind. Not without its significance, for instance, is his enthusiasm for Biblical literature : as when he notes the beauty of the penitential *Psalm*, the compelling sugggestion of the sublime majesty of God elsewhere in the *Psalms*, when the mountains, awe-struck, are said to leap at his presence, or again, wonderful narratives contained into the parables of Dives, the prodigal son, as well as in Nathan's parable of ewe-lamb. Then, too unlike the Humanists, he can discern merit in medieval litesature. In one place, for instance, he refers to the excellences of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, adding that 'I know not whether to marvel more, either that he in that misty time could see so clearly, or that we in this clear age walk so stumblingly after him'. Moreover, he can conceive of inspiring effects resulting from a reading of *Amadis of Gaul*, one of the despised romances : while in connection with the old ballads, reduced in his day to pot-house fare, he has to confess, not without some bewilderment, that he never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas, "that he found not his heart moved more than with a trumpet". To contemporary readers such comments were calculated to bring both illumination and guidance ; and in the critical development they are no less noteworthy. Sidney's standards, it is true, were ostensibly those of the ancient classics. Thus *Amadias of Gaul* he recognises is not perfect poesy ; the Ballad of *Chevy Chase*, again, he points out, falls short of the gorgeous eloquence of Pindar ; while the *Shepherd's Calendar*, for all its poetic sinews, fails to conform with the traditions of Theocritus and Virgil. Nevertheless, what is important to note is the fact that, apart from his strictures on the neglect of the Unities, his judgments are nowhere determined in accordance with rules or theories. His ultimate test is of an aesthetic kind, that is, the moving or emotional effects produced, with their bracing and uplifting results ; and these dynamic qualities in literature he is prepared to commend wherever he finds them. For a detailed analysis of these emotional effects it would be folly to look at this date ; and indeed, for sometime to come, later critics were not always able to give clear and definite reasons for the faith that was in them. The first sign of literary appreciation is to feel ; and not the least of Sidney's achievements as a critic was the early recognition of that fact.

Such then are the main contents of Sidney's *Apology for Poetry*, a work which has rightly been valued as one of the outstanding performances in English criticism and one which inaugurated a new phase in critical history. It has been described as an epitome of Renaissance theory ; but description can be misleading if it is taken to mean nothing more than a summary reproduction of classical and Italian doctrine. What gives to the work its undoubted value is its originality, the skill with which Sidney has drawn on earlier teaching, selecting, adapting and fusing together ideas gathered from many sources, in order to set forth ultimately his own conception of poetry, independently arrived at. Thus apart from the Italians, he makes use of Plato and Aristotle, Horace and Plutarch ; but, like Horace, he subscribes to the authority of no one school of thought. His treatment throughout is of an elective kind ; his conclusions are the result of personal reflection.

as well as wide reading ; and upon them is stamped the impress of a lofty personality. At the same time it cannot be doubted that Platonic influence played a considerable, perhaps a predominant, part in shaping his views, owing to affinity of spirit. To him poetry was a natural human activity enabling men to sing of beauty and truth, and to satisfy their longings for a world transformed, thus nurturing in them what was good and noble. Moreover, so far from being merely an instrument for moral teaching, it was a concrete and inspiring revelation of human ideals, and thus, in a sense, a criticism of life. This, then, with its element of permanent truth, was the substance of Sidney's message to an age perplexed and even hostile. With the traditional objections boldly faced, with claims put forward for a place for poetry in the intellectual and social life, and with attempts made at a serious treatment of the poetic art, that message constituted a vindication of poetry, individual and unique in kind, which restored to poetry something of its ancient prestige and meaning, and was calculated to bring elightenment and reassurance to his own generation.

Nor was the originality of the work confined solely to its subject-matter ; in the manner of presentation, too, will be found a freshness and vigour characteristic of Sidney alone. Writing for courtly circles and in a vein far removed from the fantastic and pedestrian styles of contemporary pamphlets and disputations, he achieved a form of expression unsurpassed even in an age of daring experiments in prose. Nowhere else do we find the same happy mingling of the ideal and the practical, the same blend of dignity and humour, of sincerity and irony, of controlled enthusiasms and racy colloquialisms ; or again, that unstudied simplicity and grace which every-where pervade the work. And over and above all this was the realistic presentment of his abstract theme in concrete terms. In antiquity the vivid representation of things by means of word-pictures had been strongly commended ; but to the Elizabethan the device seems to have come naturally and inevitably in the absence of abstract and philosophical terms. This accounts in a large measure for the appeal of much of Elizabethan prose ; and in Sidney's *Apology* it gives to the work much of its simple charm and effectiveness. It is therefore as the first piece of literary criticism in English that is literature itself that the *Apology* figures in critical history ; and appearing as it did in the dawn of the great efforescene, it forms a worthy prelude to what was to follow. Of its actual influence on contemporaries one can but conjecture though circulated in manuscript as it was among Sidney's friends up to the date of publication (1595) its effects can scarcely have been slight. On Ben Jonson its influence is abundantly clear ; the same is also true in connexion with Shakespeare and other dramatists ; while Shelley later on was not alone in deriving inspiration from its pages when he wrote his *Defence of Poetry*. As fitting legacy of one of England's noblest and gentlest souls, the work will continue to charm modern readers with its idealism, its sanity, its homour, and its grace. And nothing is surely more characteristic of the spirit of its author than the delightful irony with which he takes leave of his readers, in uttering his direful threat to all those "earth-creeping" minds who, despite the claims he had made so eagerly and convincingly, still remained deaf to "the planet-like music of poetry."

—*J.W.H. Atkins*

## (5)

It may be said that Sidney is not attacking the prejudices of his own time : that he is merely attacking argument of Plato, Greek meeting Greek. To which we many answer that he does not seriously deal with the argument of Plato, and does touch his fundamental position, which is philosophic. On the other hand, he definitely indicts the views of poetry current in his day. "From almost the higher estimation of learning," he says, "it is fallen to be the laughing-stock of children." And he speaks of the learned who inveigh against poetry.

"*And firstly, truly to all of them that profession learning inveigh against Poetry may justly be objected, that they go very near to ungratefulness, to seek to deface that, which in the noblest nations and languages that are known, hath been the first lightgiver io ignorance, and first Nurse, whose milk by little and little enabled them to feed afterwards to tougher knowledges ; and will they now play the Hedgehog, that being received into the den, drove out his host ? or rather the Vipers, that with their birth kill their parents*" ?

Sidney speaks throughout as if the learned and respectable opinion of his time was hostile to poetry—so hostile, indeed, that is was worth his while to write an *Apology* to show that poetry does not deserve this scorn, and that it has the very qualities which that respectable opinion would respect : namely that it instructs, that its purpose is moral, that it is consistent with correct religion.

And in order to help his case he weeds out the poetry which does not deserve the name. He pours scorn upon the "mongrel Tragi-comedy" of his time—the "gross absurdities," which are "neither right Tragedies nor right Comedies" : "mingling Kings and Clowns, not because the matter so carrieth it" : thrusting it "Clowns by head and shoulders, to play a part in majestical matters, with neither decency nor discretion". He exposes the false view that "there is no delight without laughter," and blames writers who stir laughter in sinful things ; are rather execrable than ridiculous : or is miserable, which are rather to be pitied than scorned."

Let us frankly recognize, he means, the faults of writing which masquerades as poetry, but not let us make true poetry chargeable with those faults. And so we return to his main argument, that poetry which is really poetry is "honest, and does not deserve to be made the laughing-stock of children." Science, history, philosophy, moral, are all under a debt of gratitude to the poets who went before with their charming sweetness to draw wild untamed wits to an admiration of knowledge. "Let learned Greece, in any of her manifold Sciences be able to show me one book before Musaeus, Homer, and Hesiodus : all three nothing else but poets...The philosophers of Greece durst not for a long time appear to the world but under the masks of poets. So *Thales*, *Empedocles*, *Parmenides* sang their natural Philosophy in verses ; so did *Pythagoras* and *Phosylides* their moral counsels : so did *Tyrataeous* in war matters, and *Solon* in matters of policy : or rather, they being Poets did exercise their delightful vein in those points of highest knowledge, which before them lay hid to the world."

He pays a higher tribute—as we should think it—to poetry when he shows that the poets have not only been scientists, historians, philosophers, but that the calling of poetry is one which has never failed to command the highest admiration. Even in the body of the work of Plato the philosopher, "though the inside and strength were philosophy, the skin, as it were, and beauty depended most on Poetry." Among the Romans a poet was called *vates*—a diviner, foreseer, or prophet—"so heavenly a little did that excellent people bestow upon this heart-ravishing knowledge." And may be not even presume to say that "the holy David's *Psalms* are a divine Poem ?"

> *For what else is the awaking of his musical instruments : the often and free chanigng of persons ; his notable Prosopopoeias when he maketh you as it were, see God coming in his Majesty : his telling of the Beasts' joyfulness, and hills leaping. but a heavenly poesy, wherein almost he sheweth himself a passionate lover of that unspeakable and everlasting beauty to be seen by the eyes of the mind, only cleared by faith ?*

Thus carried away by the critical instinct of a poet Sidney is better than his argument. Having set out to appraise the censors of his time, to prove that even if poetry could delight it was not, therefore, a "wanton of the theatre" to convince them that it conformed to their didactic standards and satisfied their schoolmasterish demand for edifying knowledge, we find him declaring, in spite of himself, that it stands supreme in its own right, and that the glory of *the Psalms* of David was nothing else but the glory of poetry. While, like Horace, he still maintains that "delightful teaching is the end of Poesy," he is already beginning to put more emphasis on "delight." It may be that he was ready to go even further, and that he would approve the judgement (recalled for us by Professor Saintsbury) uttered by the Italian, Minturno, in 1559—". It will be the business of the poet," said this critic, using words which recall the doctrine of Longinus," so to speak in his verses that he may teach, that he may delight, that he may *move*."

For all his desire to command poetry to the good opinion of the pundits, for all his willingness to borrow their standards and worn jargon, Sidney, too knew that poetry can *move*. "I never heard the old song of *Percy and Douglas*," he writes, "that I found not moved me more than with a Trumpt." —*R.A. Scott-James*

(6)

The great literary creations of Elizabethan England were certainly no slavish imitations of the classics or even of Italian literature. They cannot be attributed of the steady preparatory influences of a criticism based upon the methods and ideals of the Greeks. They are result of a continuous growth of literary work during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries made possible by the gradual removal of restraints upon the Press. They were modified, of course, by Greek, Latin, and Italian influences, and by the talk of men who had travelled and studied. Though the great Elizabethan writers were men who either had a classical education, or had come under the influence of classical scholars, they had not yet acquired the habit of thinking that their experiments in English tongue must be exclusively modelled upon the ancients. That was yet to come. At present they were rather disposed to carry on existing English traditions, which in the case of drama had been handed on from the old Morality and the early Tudor play ; and though romance writers were disposed to turn to Italy for their plots, they modified, borrowed, and invented to their hearts content. The play-wrights, the romancers, and the poets were romantic through and through right down to, and including, the time of Spenser, Marlowe, Chapman, Ben Jonson, Shakespeare. —*Sidney Lee*

(7)

So the great Revival of Letters should be thought of not as a movement produced and inspired by reverence for the rediscovered classics, but as an escape from medieval bondage, a long process in the emancipation of the arts, hastened, and made brighter and sweeter, by the intelligent reading of ancient literature. Even in the last quarter of the sixteenth century it was still necessary to assert the right of poetry to exist for its own sake. Idea dies hard. The Roman Church had discouraged the Muses because they were wantons, because they had a power and an influence which, not being hers, could only be those of the devil. When the church itself was discredited, the Muses did not at once become respectable. When the Roman Church ceased to be Puritan, Puritanism reasserted itself as a separate force in English life. It is a remarkable fact that as late as about 1581, Sir Philip Sidney should still think it necessary to write an *Apology for Poetry*. —*Sidney Lee*

(8)

Nothing will show this more curiously than the words in which Sidney anticipated (and perhaps suggested) Ben's censure of Spenser's diction as to *Shepheard's Calender*, specially if we remembers that this was said by a personal friend and by an ardent lover of poetry. That there is something to be said against the dialect of the *Calender* all responsible critics will allow. As a poetic language it is, as its best, but a preliminary exercise for the glorious medium of *The Faerie Queene* ; it is awkwardly and in some cases incorrectly blended ; and above all, the *mere* rusticity—the "hey-ho" and the rest—is a dangerous and doubtful expedient. But observe that Sidney says nothing of this kind. He "looks merely at the stop-watch" : Theocritus did not do it ; Virgil did not do it ; Sannazar did not do it ; therefore Spenser must not do it. That his own elevation of a mere modern like Sannazar to this position of a law-giver of the most tyrannic kind of an authority not merely whose will is law, not merely whose prohibition is final, but whose bare abstention from something taboos that something from the use of all mankind for ever and ever, that this did not strike Sidney as preposterous in itself, and as throwing doubt on the whole method is powerful. But even if he had stopped at Theocrites and Virgil, he would have been wrong enough. Here once more is the false Mimesis, the *prava imitatio*. Not only is the good poet to be followed in what he does, but what he does not do serves as a bar to posterity in all time from doing it. *—George Saintsbury*

## ( 9 )

There is another point in which Sidney and Ben are alike and in which they may even seem to anticipate the general adoption of "Reason", of the Good Sense, as the criterian, which the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries claimed as their own, and which some recent critics have rather kindly allowed them. Sidney's raillery of the romantic life-drama, Ben's reported strictures on the sea-coast of Bohemia, and his certain ones on "Caesar did no wrong", etc., express the very spirit of this cheap rationalism, which was later to defray a little even of Dryden's criticism, almost the whole of Boileau's, and for too much of Pope's. The ancients, to do them justice, are not entirely to be blamed for this. There is very little of it in Aristotle, who quite understands that the laws of poetry are now the laws of history or of science. But there is a great deal of it in Horace : and as we shall see, the authority of the great Greek was, during three centuries which form the subject of this volume, more and more used as a mere cloak for the opinions of the clever Roman. Meanwhile, such books, as those of Webbe and Puttenham, such an ordeal by battle as that fought out by Campion and Daniel, even such critical *Jaculata* as those of Meres and Bolton, were all in different ways doing work, mistaken sometimes in kind, but always useful in general effect. *—George Saintsbury*

## (10)

As a prose writer Sidney has also a distinct place of his own. The form and machinery of the *Arcadia* are again Italian or, more correctly, Spanish ; the classical scenery and imagery are the natural outcome of the renaissance ; but the harmonious beauty of the style is Sidney's own. In appreciation of the charms of nature it is ahead of its age ; and though its lack of plot and its prolix descriptions make it wearysome to the modern reader, it was by the far most popular Novel of its time. The *Apology* does not labour the reproach of prolixity or tediousness. Though some of its arguments and theories would be rejected today, it is full of insight and clear statement, and delivers sober judgement which are as applicable now as when Sidney penned them. The charm of the style has often been remarked, and it has been declared by competent critics to be the first piece of really harmonious prose in our language. Without committing ourselves to so general an assertion, we may yet recognise the beauty of such passages as these : "*With a tale forsooth he commeth to you, with a tale which holdeth children from play and old men from the chimney corner* ; *and pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue* : *So is it in men,—most of which are childish in the best things till they be cradled in their grave* : *or the description of the historion better acquainted with a thousand year ago, than with the present age, and yet better knowing how this world goeth, than how his own wit runneth* : *curious for antiquities, and inquisitive of novelties, a wonder to young folks, and a tyrant in table-talk* : *or the definition of learning as this purifying of wit, this enriching of memory, enabling of judgement, and enlarging of conceit or of reading as the gathering of many knowledges.* Another noticeable feature of the essay is its originality. True, the ancients are ransacked for examples, and the dicta of Greek, Roman or Italian writers regarded as settling questions, as though by the voice of nature : still thc writer is also continually speaking of what he has been and known. Thus the essay beings with a reference to a personal experience ; the illustration from Italy, Hungary, Ireland and Wales are from his own knowledge ; his references to West Indian customs are the fruits of its own intense interest in the great discoveries of the age, his own discontent prompts his reference to the over-faint quietness of the time, his own taste is expressed in his criticism on the cold artificiality of the love poetry of the day, even to the pedantic tricks, "of coursing of a letter". Though he uses Aristotle's and Scaliger's Poetics freely in his classification of poets, and in many of his definitions, yet he uses them with the independence which comes of study at first hand ; and his classical quotations as a rule are not too hackneyed or obvious, and seen generally to be made from memory and with such alterations as suited him. With no author was he apparently more entirely familiar than with Plutarch ; a familiarty shown not indeed by direct quotation, but by numerous expressions which come evidently from an almost unconscious reproduction of thoroughly assimilated thoughts.

*—Evelyn S. Shuckburgh*

### (11)

There remains his two major heresies, the declaration that verse is not inseparable from poetry, and the denunciation of tragi-comedy. In both the authority of the ancients must bear again good part of the blame, but in both he has additional excuses. As to the "pestilent heresy of prose poetry," he is at least not unwilling to aruge on the hypothesis that verse were necessary to poetry, though he does not think it is. He is quite sure that verse is any how a nobler medium than prose. As for the plays there is still more excuse for him. His classical authorities were quite clear on the point ; and as yet there was nothing to be quoted on the other side—at least in English. Spanish had indeed already made the experiment of tragi-comic and anti-unitarian treatment ; but I do not think any of the best Spanish examples had yet appeared, and there is great difference between the two theatres. In English itself not only signle great or even good play certainly existed on the model at Sidney's death ; and, from what we have of what did exist, we can judge how the rough verse, the clumsy construction, or rather absence of construction, and the higgledy-piggledy of huddled horrors and horseplay, must have shocked a taste delicate in itself and nursed upon classical and Italian literature, and it is noteworthy that even *Gorboduc*, with all its regularity and "Senecation", does not bribe Sidney to overlook at least some of its defects. He is here, as elsewhere,—as indeed throughout,—neither blind nor bigoted. He is only in the position of a man very imperfectly supplied with actual experiments and observations, confronted with stage of creative production but just improving from a very bad state, and relying on old and approved methods as against new ones which had as yet had no success. *—George Saintsbury*

### (12)

Beginning with a touch of humour, on the tendency of everybody to extol his own vocation, he plunges almost at once, into the strong defence of poetry . from its age and wonders ascribed to it of old ; its connection with philosophy ; the way in which Plato is poetical even in his onslaughts upon it ; its time honoured and world spread vogue ; the high and incomparable titles of *paites*, *vates*, *maker* ; its command of every kind of subject vying with nature in something like creation ; its connection with Divinity itself. Then he sketches its kinds, and insists upon the poet's nobleness as against all competitors, setting him above both philosopher and historian. Examples of excellence for imitation and for misdoing for avoidance, are given. The poet has all "from Dante his heaven to his hell" under the authority of his pen. After much this, he returns to the kinds—examining and dismissing the objections to pastoral elegy and what not. At this point he makes a sweep towards his special subject of drama, but touches it lightly and goes off to the heroic, whence his preamble or exposition being finishd, he comes to 'poet-haters', the name and even the person, of Gosson being carefully left in obscurity. He examines and dismisses once more the stock objections—waste of time, lying, encouragement of evil desires etc., and of course, sets the excellence of use against the possibility of abuse. And so, all generalities done (the famous commendation, of *Chevy Chase*, Percy and Douglas has occurred long before) he shapes his concluding course towards English poetry to find out why England his grown so hard a step-mother towards poets ; why there is such a cold welcome for poetry here. And at this point both the most strictly genuine criticism and the most piquant oddity of the piece begin, though it would be very unfair to Sidney not to remember that he is writing just after *The Shepheard's Calender* had appeared, in the mere overture of the great Elizabethan concert. —*George Saintsbury*

## (13)

On the whole Sidney agrees with Gosson in holding existing English literature cheap, especially English drama, but he condemns it not for reasons of morals but because the works he considers seem to him weak, mediocre, ridiculous, bereft of art. Of poetry in itself he has the most exalted conception. The poet is for him the first law-giver, the *vates* superior both to the historian, who is chained to reality, and to the philosopher, who is obliged to be constantly severe and abstract. The poet paints the ideal with beguiling charm. Far from softening men, poetry has been the chief awakener of the warlike spirit and the virtues of slavery. Even a popular ill-rhymed ballad like *Chevy Chase*, "sung but by some blind crowder with no rougher voice than the rude stile," even the Arthurian romances with all their absurdities, are a call to man's courage and his desire for glory. In conclusion, Sidney declares that although English literature is still poor, it seems to him capable of high destinies. —*Legouis and Cazamian*

## (14)

The style of the *Defence of Poesie* is eloquent, frequently poetic, but much less decorate, both franker and more virile, than that of the *Arcadia*. Sidney makes fun in it of Euphuism, proposes Demosthenes and Cicero as models, and protests against the abuse of literary ornaments. "For now they cast sugar and spice upon every dish that is severed at the table ; like those Indians not content to wear ear-rings at the fit and natural place of the ears but they will thrust jewels through their nose and lips, because they will be sure to be fine." —*Legouis and Cazamian*

# 11

# *University Questions*

1. What were the circumstances which led Sidney to write his *Apologie for Poetrie* ?

2. What are the special claims for Poetry made by Sir Philip Sidney in his *Defence of Poesie* ?

3. Critically examine Sidney's views about the antiquity of poetry.

4. Write a short note on Sidney's views on the nature of Poetry.

5. Critically examine what Sidney says about the function of Poetry.

6. "Poetry is an art of imitation." Discuss with special reference to Sidney's views on Imitation.

7. "It is not rhyming and versing that maketh a poet." Discuss this statement of Sidney.

8. How does Sidney establish the superiority of the poet over the philosopher ?

9. Make a comparative study of the functions of History and Poetry and show how the poet is superior to a historian.

10. What were the various objections raised by Puritans against Poetry ? How does Sidney answer them ?

11. What is Sidney's conception of Tragedy ? Do you find any difference between his views and those of Aristotle ?

12. What according to Sidney are the chief defects of contemporary drama ?

13. Lack of the Unities in Contemporary Drama is its greatest defects, according to Sidney. Examine critically his views in this connection.

14. Reproduce Sidney's observations on the Comedy of his days.

15. Examine closely the views of Sidney on Lyric Poetry.

16. Write a brief note on Sidney's views on 'Diction and Style' of Poetry.

17. Give in brief Sidney's views on the use of figure of speech and other decorations of language.

18. What does Sidney say about the English Language and Prosody ?

19. Was Sidney a classical critic or a romantic one or was he both ? Give reasons for your answer.

20. Write a note on Sidney's achievement as a critic.

21. Write a short essay on Sidney's originality as a critic.

22. Write a note on the permanent value of *the Apologie for Poetry.*

23. Discuss Sidney's views on the State of English Literature at the time when he wrote his *Apologie for Poetry.*

24. Consider the view that, "though by training Sidney is a classicist, he is by taste and temperament a romantic."

25. Examine the general point of view adopted by Sidney in his *Apologie for Poetry*, and his gifts as a critic.

26. "No other critical work, as broad and as much alive, was written in this period." Do you think that Sidney's *Defence of Poesie* fully deserves this praise ?

27. "One may be a poet without versing and a versifier without Poetry."—(Sidney). How far do you agree with the view that verse is not essential to Poetry ?

28. What views of poetry were current at the time when Sidney wrote his *Apology* ? How does he controvert them ?

29. Comment on Sidney's use of the term 'imitation' in connection with poetry.

30. Critically examine the views of Sidney on Tragi-Comedy.

31. How does Sidney arrive at the conclusion that of all sciences.........is our Poet the Monarch ? Analyse and evaluate his arguments.

32. What is the type of Composition Sidney means by *Iambic* and what by *Satire* ? How would you distinguish between the two ? Illustrate your remarks.

33. Analyse and discuss Sidney's observations on Comedy.

34. Fully discuss Sidney's views on the three unities, and compare his views with those of Dryden and Johnson.

35. Compare and contrast Sidney's condemnation of Tragi-Comedy with the justification of Dryden and Johnson.

36. What according to Sidney are the various divisions and sub-divisions of Poetry ?

37. Show that Sidney's conception of imitation is creative.

38. What has Sidney to say on poetic inspiration ?

# *Suggested Readings*

1. Abrams, M.H. : *The Mirror and the Lamp* : *Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition.*
2. Atkins, J.W.H. : *English Literary Criticism* : *The Renaissance.*
3. Boas, F.S. : *Sir Philip Sidney. Representative Elizabethan* : *His Life and Writings.*
4. Buxton, J. : *Sir Philip Sidney and the English Renaissance.*
5. Daiches, D. : *Critical Approaches to Literature.*
6. Greville, Fulke. : *The Life of the Renowned Sir Philip Sidney.*
7. Lewis, C.S. : *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, excluding drama.*
8. Myrick, K. O. : *Sir Philip Sidney as a Literary Craftsman.*
9. Rudenstein, N.L. : *Sidney's Poetic Development.*
10. Saintsbury, G. : *A History of English Criticism.*
11. Smith, G.G. : *Elizabethan Critical Essays, Vol. I.*
12. Spingarn, J.E. : *A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance.*
13. Symonds, J.A. : *Sir Philip Sidney.*
14. Wilson, Mona : *Sir Philip Sidney.*
15. Wimsatt, Jr. W.K. and Brooks, C. : *Literary Criticism* : *A Short History.*
16. Shepherd, G. (ed) : *An Apology for Poetry.*
17. Cook, A.S. (ed) : *An Apology for Poetry.*
18. Churton Collins, J. (ed) : *An Apology for Poetry.*
19. Shuckburgh, E.S. (ed) : *A Defence of Poetry.*
20. Van Dorsten, J.A. (ed.) : *A Defence of Poetry.*

G.M. College of Education
Raipur, Bantalab
Jammu.
Acc. No. 2492 (D)
Dated. 4/11/2015

× [illegible]

2

Pre[illegible] Dhar
M.A. (Pol. Sc. Eco. Eng. Hist.) B.Ed.
Motiyar Rainawari
SRINAGER-190003
KASHMIR

# OUR PUBLICATIONS

*By the Same Author :*

T.S. ELIOT :

1. *The 'Waste Land' and Other Poems*
2. *The Critic*
3. *Murder in the Cathedral*
4. *The Cocktail Party*
5. *The Family Reunion*

BERNARD SHAW :

6. *Man and Superman*
7. *Arms and the Man*
8. *Saint Joan*
9. *Candida*
10. *Major Barbara*

GEORGE ELIOT :

11. *Middlemarch*
12. *Mill on the Floss*

ARISTOTLE :

13. *The Poetics*

COLERIDGE :

14. *Biographia Literaria*

WORDSWORTH :

15. *Preface to the Lyrical Ballads*

DRYDEN :

16. *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*

SIDNEY :

17. *An Apology for Poetry*

JOHN WEBSTER :

18. *Duchess of Malfi*

VIRGINIA WOOLF :

19. *To The Lighthouse*
20. *Mrs Dalloway*

W.M. THACKERAY :

21. *Vanity Fair*

JOSEPH CONRAD :

22. *Lord Jim*

ROBERT BROWNING :

23. *Select Poems, Vol. I*
24. *Select Poems, Vol. II*

ALFRED TENNYSON :

25. *Select Poems*

W.H. AUDEN :

26. *Select Poems*
27. *Ascent of F-6*

JOHN DONNE :

28. *Select Poems*

JOHN MILTON :

29. *Minor Poems*

MATTHEW ARNOLD :

30. *Essays in Criticism*

SHAKESPEARE :

31. *Much Ado About Nothing*
32. *Henry IV, Part I*
33. *Richard II*

ROBERT FROST :

34. *Select Poems*

WALT WHITMAN :

35. *Select Poems*

EUGENE O'NEILL :

36. *The Hairy Ape*
37. *Desire Under the Elms*
38. *The Iceman Cometh*

R.K. NARAYAN :

39. *The Guide*

TAGORE :

40. *Gitanjali*

RAJA RAO :

41. *Kanthapura*
42. *The Serpent and the Rope*

KAMALA MARKANDAYA :

43. *Nectar in a Sieve*

MULKH RAJ ANAND :

44. *Coolie*
45. *Untouchable*
46. ***History and Principles of Literary Criticism***
47. ***New Criticism and New Critics***
48. ***The Background to English Literature***

**49. New-Pattern English Grammar and Composition**

---

**RAMA BROTHERS**